United Nations Environment Programme

EP

Distr.
GENERAL

UNEP/GCSS.II/2
28 May 1990

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Governing Council
Second special session

Nairobi, 1-3 August 1990
Item 3 of the Provisional Agenda

PRIORITY EVOLVING ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Report of the Executive Director

Na.90-0041 - 2097E

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

At its fifteenth session in May 1990 the Governing Council, in its decision 15/4, noting the increasing number of environmental issues calling for further elaboration and decision-making, decided to hold a three-day special session immediately before the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

Mounting public concern has put the environment at the top of the political agenda. But despite the interest, unease persists because, although gains have been made on certain fronts, the environment is in general worse off now than 20 years ago. The Governing Council has a significant role to play and should, at its special session, recommend and authorize specific actions on priority environmental needs.

I. The issues: Developments Since the Fifteenth Regular Session

There have been substantial developments since the Council's fifteenth regular session in 1989. Scientific evaluation has confirmed the increasing depletion of the ozone layer and, when they meet in London from 20 to 29 June this year, the Parties to the Montreal Protocol will examine a series of additional control measures to reduce chlorine loadings. To help achieve global compliance with the Protocol, they will also consider measures relating to technology transfer and financial mechanisms to ensure the flow of additional resources to developing countries to assist them in meeting the provisions of the Montreal Protocol. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) will finalize by August 1990 its interim report on greenhouse gases and climate change which will underpin future response action. A ministerial session at the Second World Climate Conference, to be held in Geneva from 27 October to 7 November 1990, and the United Nations General Assembly will review the IPCC report and recommend action. UNEP and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) have been preparing the way for negotiations on a convention on climate change. Transboundary air pollution remains serious and there is a need to strengthen and expand the Background Air Pollution Monitoring Network (BAPMoN).

Concerning fresh water, UNEP is preparing action plans for Lake Chad and the Aral Sea. With regard to oceans and coastal areas, UNEP has sponsored the recent report of the Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Pollution (GESAMP) which, although it is reassuring about the state of the open ocean, highlights the critical state of coastal areas and contains specific recommendations for action. Progress under the regional seas programmes continues.

To combat desertification, UNEP has initiated action to carry out the General Assembly's request for an evaluation of progress in implementing the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification, and has initiated a study on the financing of anti-desertification programmes. To combat deforestation action has been initiated, in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Bank and the University of Minnesota, to prepare a practical manual on assessment of forest value. UNEP has also continued its collaboration in the implementation of the Tropical Forestry Action Plan.

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Progress is being made towards the development of an international convention on biological diversity. Studies have been initiated to cover specific issues in this development process. In the environmentally sound management of biotechnology, the proposed new convention on biological diversity is expected to take into account the full implications of new biotechnologies.

The Interim Secretariat for the Basel Convention on hazardous wastes has started its work to develop a protocol on liability and technical guidelines for environmentally sound waste management; yet financial contributions from States Parties are lagging, threatening to bring the interim secretariat's activities to a complete halt. UNEP and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations are moving forward with a joint programme for implementing prior informed consent (PIC) procedures for international trade in toxic chemicals.

Progress continues to be made on the Cairo Programme for African Co-operation of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN), and the preparation of a draft Action Plan for the Environment in Latin America and the Caribbean is well under way.

The Executive Director will inform the Council at the session of the most recent developments on these issues.

Across-the-Board Issues

Environmentally sound development has focused greater attention on the linkage between environment and economics. UNEP has continued to address means of integrating environmental factors into development decision-making by assisting in the fields of policies, legislation, institutions, environmental assessment, and resource accounting. A greater effort needs to be applied to these matters, as well as to the environmental aspects of sectoral policies, debt, structural adjustment, taxation, and trade.

Two issues have taken on greater significance in the search for action on environmental issues - additional financial resources and technology transfer, especially for developing countries. With traditional sources of funding stagnating, there are calls for additional funding for environmentally sound development activities, as the new global developments make it almost impossible for the developing countries to respond to major environmental issues. Additional resources on concessional terms are essential. The World Bank is exploring a proposal for a Global Environmental Facility to help developing countries finance activities related to ozone depletion, greenhouse gas emissions, water resources and biodiversity. The facility would be administered in co-operation with UNEP and UNDP. The Open-Ended Working Group of Parties to the Montreal Protocol and an IPCC working group are also exploring new funding mechanisms.

The transfer of environmentally sound technology and know-how is another essential ingredient in achieving environmental progress. The industrialized countries cannot expect the developing countries to forego the benefits of ozone layer depleting substances or fossil fuels unless there is a transfer of the newly developed substitute technologies on a concessionary basis. Within the framework of the Montreal Protocol, UNEP has made a great effort with Governments, industry, the International Chamber of Commerce and the World Intellectual Property Organization to see if ways to overcome patent, commercial and information-related obstacles can be achieved so that technology to protect the environment can be shared.

Environmentally sound development and global issues require actions at both the national and local level. Environmental and sectoral ministries must be strengthened and must co-operate more closely, and the various United Nations agencies and bodies must play a vigorous supporting role. UNEP has a special part to play in bolstering national environmental administrations.

III. State of the environment report 1992

The structure of the 1992 state-of-the-environment report for presentation to the 1992 Conference has been agreed. It addresses main environmental issues of general concern as well as the impact of development and socio-economic policies on the environment, environment quality and human health, the responses to environmental changes, and challenges and the future outlook.

IV. Secretary-General's report to 1992 Conference

The Designated Officials for Environmental Matters (DOEM) have prepared a document for the Secretary-General on activities of the United Nations system related to the 1992 Conference. The Secretary-General is expected to forward this report to the Preparatory Committee for the 1992 Conference.

V. Strengthening the role of UNEP and the Governing Council

Mounting interest in and activity on the environment calls for strengthening the role of UNEP and its Governing Council. Possible steps for accomplishing this include expanding the membership of the Governing Council: establishing an Executive Committee of the Council; the possibility of the Council holding of joint meetings with the UNDP Governing Council; designating one day of the Council's sessions to address relevant issues of one of the five regions and; providing a role for the Council in environmental conciliation, conflict resolution and the verification of the implementation of environmental agreements and decisions. A proposal is made for the Council to hold a special session in 1992, either prior to or following the Conference on Environment and Development.

The Council may wish to recommend the provision of adequate finances to ensure that the mechanisms serviced by UNEP for co-ordination in the field of the environment - the Designated Officials for Environment Matters, the Committee of International Development Institutions on the Environment, and the Ecosystem Conservation Group - are used to the full.

In addition, the Council may wish to consider setting a target for annual contributions of $250 million to the Environment Fund by the year 1995. A major policy issue that the Council may wish to consider is a feasibility study, by the Executive Director on financing the whole of the UNEP secretariat from the Environment Fund to be presented to the Council at its next regular session, in 1991.

To reinforce UNEP's visibility as the leading body of the United Nations system dealing with problems in the environment, several possible activities are outlined for consideration, including the establishment of a United Nations Centre for Urgent Environmental Assistance; the concept of an early warning system for the risk of environmental degradation; the creation of a world environment academy; the mobilization of a "green brigade" of volunteers. Further, the Council may wish to explore the idea of UNEP reviewing the environmental impacts of the major activities carried out by other United Nations bodies and agencies.

VI. Joint messages

Owing to the importance of providing authoritative information, the executive heads of a number of United Nations organizations are considering issuing joint statements on international environment-development issues providing information for high-level decision makers. The attributes of the proposed joint statements are listed.

Annex

Proposed action by the Governing Council

In this Annex, the Executive Director requests policy guidance on issues that are to be referred to the Preparatory Committee for the 1992 Conference; on the strengthening of the role of UNEP; and on evolving environmental issues.

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INTRODUCTION

1. At its fifteenth session, in May 1989, the Governing Council noted the increasing number of evolving environmental issues and considered that some of these issues called for further policy elaboration and decision-making by the Council. For this purpose in its decision 15/4 the Council decided to hold a three-day special session in 1990, immediately preceding, and in the same location as, the first meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. The Governing Council further decided that the special session should deal "with the elaboration of, and the process of making and implementing decisions on, priority environmental issues, in particular, ways and means of enhancing the role of the United Nations Environment Programme in addressing those issues ...". The Governing Council approved the provisional agenda for the session, the substantive item being entitled "Priority evolving environmental issues".

2. By paragraph 7 of its resolution 44/229 of 22 December 1989, the General Assembly supported the decision of the Governing Council to hold a special session and reiterated the subjects to be addressed at the session.

3. In preparing the present report, the Executive Director has drawn on the views and comments of a number of ministers and high-level government officials, whom he invited, in their personal capacities, to an informal meeting held at Nairobi from 24 to 26 January 1990.

4. Less than 25 years ago, the topic of the "environment" - if mentioned at all - would have been listed among the "et ceteras" under "other business" on almost any international agenda. Today, it is at the top of the world's political agenda. In years gone by, climate, ozone, soil erosion, deforestation, water and air pollution, toxic wastes and dangerous chemicals were subjects of discussion almost exclusively within scientific circles. It was from these circles that the first alarms were sounded and those warnings were soon taken up by concerned groups. Indeed, it was this development that gave rise to the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in 1972 and the subsequent birth of UNEP.

5. Today, the scientists are talking and discussing these issues with a new sense of urgency. But they are now joined by the world's political leadership. The big environmental conferences and meetings are now of a political rather than a scientific nature. Over the last 18 months or so, there has been a major environmental conference nearly every month.

6. During the first quarter of 1989, world media reported on the London "Saving the Ozone Layer Conference", on the Declaration of The Hague on the environment, and on the Basel Conference of Plenipotentiaries which adopted the Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal. During the following three months, the meetings of the Contracting Parties to the Vienna Convention and Montreal Protocol, the fifteenth session of the UNEP Governing Council and the African Regional Conference on Environment and Sustainable Development were held. And, in July, the Heads of State and Government of seven major industrialized countries met in Paris for "a green summit".

7. Later in 1989, the summit meeting of the Heads of State or Government of non-aligned countries and the meeting of Commonwealth Heads of State or Government both laid great stress on environmental issues. In the last third of the year, the United Nations General Assembly, at its forty-fourth regular session, devoted an unprecedented amount of time to environmental topics and decided to hold a United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Brazil in 1992 - twenty years after the first United Nations Conference on the Human Environment was held at Stockholm. In Tokyo, a Conference on the Global Environment and Human Response Towards Sustainable Development was convened, and Arab ministers for the environment held a conference in Cairo. As part of the process of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, 35 Governments met in Sofia, Bulgaria, to discuss the protection of the environment. The Netherlands hosted a ministerial Conference on Atmospheric Pollution and Climate Change, and a World Conference on Preparing for Climate Change was held in Cairo.

8. In March of the current year, the Preparatory Committee for the 1992 Conference on Environment and Development held a two-week organizational session in New York. It will hold its first substantive session in Nairobi, immediately following the special session of the Governing Council. In April, the United States hosted a conference on global warming. In June, the United Kingdom will host the Second Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol. In short, there has recently been such a spate of environmental meetings and conferences that even UNEP, the United Nations organ dealing specifically with the environment, is hard pressed to keep up.

9. All this interest in the environment is most encouraging and gives cause for gratification. Yet a disquieting sense of unease persists. We rush from meeting to meeting, read and draft paper after paper, issue communiques and declarations, adopt resolutions, decisions and action plans. But for what result? Despite advances in certain specific sectors and local areas since the Stockholm Conference in 1972, the overall picture is bleak. From an environmental point of view, in spite of success stories on various fronts, it may be said that in general the world is worse off now than 20 years ago: the air is more polluted, great tracts of arable land have been lost through erosion and soil degradation, forest cover has decreased, the depletion of the ozone layer continues, the seas are still threatened, and more species have become extinct or are on the way to extinction.

10. There have certainly been some improvements through national and international efforts: the condition of our environment could and most certainly would have been worse without our combined efforts. But our efforts have obviously not yet met the myriad challenges and threats to our planet's life-support system. Conferences and meetings, papers and documents, resolutions and decisions will not in themselves save, protect or enhance our environment.

11. What is now needed is action rather than rhetoric, deeds rather than words, commitments rather than communiques. And where better to start than with the Governing Council of UNEP, the intergovernmental body entrusted by the General Assembly with the task of providing general policy guidance for the direction and co-ordination of environmental programmes within the United Nations system. 1/ Preceding sessions of the Governing Council have

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1/ General Assembly Resolution 2997 (XXVII), section I, paragraph 2 (b).

taken momentous steps. The Governing Council has: approved two United Nations System-Wide Medium-Term Environment Programmes, covering the periods 1984-1989, and 1990-1995 respectively; proposed to the General Assembly the creation of a World Commission on Environment and Development; submitted to the General Assembly a draft Environmental Perspective to the Year 2000 and Beyond, which the Assembly subsequently adopted; authorized UNEP to initiate work on the problem of ozone layer depletion, which led to the adoption of the Vienna Convention and Montreal Protocol; requested the Executive Director to establish an ad hoc working group on the subject of transboundary movements of hazardous wastes, the result of which was the Basel Convention.

12. The Governing Council can point with pride to these and other achievements, but we dare not rest on our laurels for the tasks are daunting and time is short. The present session of the Council should not just consider and take note of priority evolving environmental issues, but should recommend and authorize very specific actions on them. The Council members, collectively and individually, are urged to commit themselves and their Governments to the challenges before us.

I. THE ISSUES: DEVELOPMENTS SINCE THE FIFTEENTH REGULAR SESSION

13. The Governing Council's own proposed list of issues of major environmental concern prepared during its fifteenth session was accepted by the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session and, in resolution 44/228 of 22 December 1989, constituted the main environmental issues which the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development should address in the development context. This was undoubtedly an accomplishment for the UNEP Governing Council, and a reaffirmation of the Council's close identification with the major environment-development issues facing the international community. The Executive Director has been addressing these issues, as have the Designated Officials for Environmental Matters (DOEM), and will continue to report on progress thereon as required.

Protection of the Atmosphere

14. Three aspects of the protection of the atmosphere are addressed in paragraphs 15 to 23 below: the ozone layer; climate change; and transboundary air pollution.

The ozone layer

15. Continuing scientific evaluation of the state of the ozone layer has confirmed the risk of its continued depletion by chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and other ozone-destroying chemicals. Observations show an ever-deepening seasonal hole in the ozone layer above Antarctica and statistically significant wintertime losses of stratospheric ozone over high northern latitudes. Even with full implementation of the Montreal Protocol as originally formulated, the Antarctic ozone hole will be a permanent feature during the southern hemisphere springtime and the chlorine loading of the atmosphere can increase, with the potential to cause additional destruction of global ozone. The consequences of future ozone depletion on human health, on the health of the environment and on the various ecosystems, especially with respect to crop production, appear grave.

16. All Parties to the Montreal Protocol agree on the necessity to strengthen the Protocol and are examining a series of additional control measures to limit further atmospheric chlorine loading and, eventually, to reduce chlorine concentrations to near pre-industrial levels, which is the necessary condition for repairing the Antarctic ozone hole and stopping global ozone depletion.

17. In view of the need to achieve global compliance with a strengthened Montreal Protocol, the special needs of developing countries for technology transfer and compensatory financial mechanisms to enable them to take part in and benefit from the Protocol must be met quickly. This matter has been given special attention by the Executive Director and by an Open-Ended Working Group of the Parties, whose recommendations, together with the proposed changes in the current control measures under the Protocol, will be considered by the Second Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol in London in June. Country-specific studies have been or are being undertaken to assist the Parties in estimating the total financial cost to developing countries of compliance with the provisions of the Protocol. To date, fifty-six countries and the European Economic Community, representing more than 90 per cent of the 1986 global CFC and halon consumption, are Parties to the Protocol. But unless major developing countries agree to restrict future production of CFCs,

they will shift the balance toward increasing production and further depletion of the ozone layer. Agreement on these matters will depend on the outcome of the London meeting, particularly with respect to commitment by the industrialized countries to making available additional financial resources and to finding solutions for the issues relating to the transfer of the necessary technologies. The Executive Director will report to the Governing Council at its special session on the outcome of the London meeting.

Climate change

18. The UNEP/World Meteorological Organization (WMO) Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) will finalize its interim report on greenhouse gases and climate change by the end of August 1990. The Panel, utilizing the services of about fifteen-hundred experts, acknowledges the uncertainties about the consequences for climate of continued emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases into the atmosphere and the regional impacts of global warming and sea-level rise. Nevertheless, its considered judgement seems to indicate that there is a probability of global warming that could lead to an unprecedented rise in global average temperature in perhaps less than 50 years. The impacts of global warming could alter rainfall patterns and have serious environmental consequences, including effects on agricultural production, the availability of water, changes to ecosystems and the inundation of coastal lands due to rising sea levels. IPCC, through its Response Strategies Working Group, has also reviewed the options for limiting potential climate change and for adapting to already unavoidable changes resulting from the amount of atmospheric alteration caused by a century of industrial greenhouse gas emissions.

19. The IPCC report will underpin response action to limit future climate change, now acknowledged as necessary by the world community, and will be considered at the Second World Climate Conference, to be held in Geneva from 27 October to 7 November 1990, in particular by the ministerial portion of the Conference, which is expected to make recommendations for actions to protect the global climate.

20. In accordance with Governing Council decisions and with resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly and of the WMO Executive Council, UNEP and WMO have been preparing the way for negotiations on a convention on climate. Utilizing the advice of the Advisory Group on Greenhouse Gases and the UNEP/WMO Task Force on Climate Change, the two organizations have consulted Governments on national actions taken or contemplated to limit climate change and on the elements which might be included in a climate convention. It is felt that a convention containing specific obligations for Parties in respect of improved energy efficiency and targets for reafforestation and possibly for emissions of greenhouse gases would in itself have considerable environmental and economic benefits in addition to reducing the likely extent of global warming. With the publication of the IPCC report, sufficient information and recommendations will be available for the negotiation process on a convention to begin. The Executive Director of UNEP and the Secretary-General of WMO are recommending that their governing bodies authorize them to convene jointly an ad hoc working group of legal and technical experts, with a mandate to negotiate a framework convention on climate. The organizational meeting of the group could be convened in September 1990 and the first substantive meeting held before the end of the year or in early 1991. This substantive meeting would be held in Washington D.C. in response to the invitation

extended by the President of the United States when he opened the third session of IPCC. Governments would be well advised to include some of their representatives in the IPCC process in the working group negotiating the convention. The target date for the working group to finish its work would be around March-April 1992 to allow the convention to be adopted and be open for signature during the period of the 1992 Conference.

21. While negotiations on the convention proceed, the Governing Council may wish to reiterate its decision 15/36 and call attention to General Assembly resolution 44/207 of 22 December 1989 on climate, and urge Governments to take specific actions at the national level which help delay possible climate change and which in themselves make sound economic and environmental sense. This is an issue that the Governing Council may wish to raise with the Preparatory Committee for the 1992 Conference.

Transboundary air pollution

22. Uncontrolled emissions of industrial waste gases have increased the concentrations of oxides of nitrogen and sulphur in the atmospheric boundary layer. These gases are subsequently transformed into acidic compounds which return to earth as dry deposition or are precipitated as rain or snow. Winds also transport the pollutants to regions remote from the source of the effluent, often across borders and oceans to other territories. Environmental damage associated with acidic deposition includes damage to trees, the acidification of soils and surface and ground water, with consequent destruction of vulnerable aquatic and terrestrial organisms. Serious damage has been identified in Europe and North America. Acid rain corrodes buildings and has already damaged irreplaceable antiquities, particularly in Europe. Recent studies have identified air pollution damage in developing country regions hitherto unsullied by this form of pollution. Long-range transport of emissions from industrialized to developing countries has been identified as the cause of this growing threat.

23. Although research and monitoring of background air pollution has improved and national and regional air pollution legislation has been adopted, much more must be done to reverse this environmental threat, including strengthening and expanding the Background Air Pollution Monitoring Network (BAPMoN). This will begin by using some of the resources expected for the supplementary programme approved last year by the Governing Council. However, far more resources will be needed if the monitoring and assessment are to provide a firm base for decisions and actions by Governments. This is another issue that the Governing Council may wish to call to the attention of the Preparatory Committee for the 1992 Conference.

Protection of the Quality of Freshwater Resources

24. UNEP, in co-operation with a number of United Nations bodies and agencies, is focusing its attention on preparing and implementing action plans for the environmentally sound management of inland waters. The Zambezi Action Plan was completed and ready for implementation in 1987. It is now within the framework of action of the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference. A diagnostic study of the environmental degradation in the Lake Chad basin was adopted in Yaoundé in December 1989 by the ministers of the environment from the countries concerned. A draft master plan for the basin is being prepared and is expected to be adopted before the end of 1990.

25. At the request of the Government of the USSR, UNEP has initiated the preparation of an Action Plan for the Aral Sea, whose state of degradation is a matter of serious concern. A multi-objective action plan is contemplated for the Orinoco river basin, and the Nile river basin is also under consideration.

26. Much more could be done in this field if more resources were available, not only to the United Nations Environment Programme, but to all relevant United Nations bodies.

Protection of Ocean and Coastal Areas and Resources

27. The second report of the Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Pollution (GESAMP) on the state of the marine environment, largely sponsored by UNEP, was released in early 1990. As background for the report, UNEP supported the preparation of a series of regional reports on the state of the marine environment, which will be published by the end of 1990. Although the GESAMP report, which was based on inputs from a large number of agencies and specialists and which represents the consensus of the world's leading authorities, is reassuring about the state of the open ocean, it highlights the critical and rapidly deteriorating state of coastal areas.

28. Coastal and continental shelf waters contain the most significant marine resources and are the focus of most human activity. They could deteriorate significantly in the next decade, unless development is controlled both along the coast and inland, and this will often require painful social and political choices, including costly measures to reduce wastes and conserve raw materials. Other concerns, such as the effects of climate change and possible sea-level rise and of a reduction in stratospheric ozone, may be important, but could not at present be assessed in the report. The report emphasizes that too little is being done at present, particularly at the national level, to ensure the health of the sea and the maintenance of its resources.

29. The Governing Council may wish to recommend that the Preparatory Committee for the 1992 Conference take up this issue, which illustrates the interaction between environment and development, with a view to recommending specific actions over specific periods of time, indicating their costs and identifying the sources to meet such costs, with the target of getting the Conference to adopt such actions.

30. In response to the global concern about predicted climate changes, UNEP has organized regional task teams to consider the effects of such changes on coastal and marine areas and on socio-economic activities, the first of these studies will be available towards the end of the current year. Planning is also well advanced for a joint Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission/WMO/UNEP co-ordinated long-term programme for monitoring phenomena in the coastal zone that are attributable to climate changes. All this will certainly need additional financial resources if the results are to be obtained within a reasonable time.

31. Under the regional seas programmes, efforts continue to conclude new legal agreements for the South Asian and East Asian Seas, with the holding of meetings of legal experts in February 1990. Existing programmes continue to be reinforced, with new protocols adopted in the Caribbean region and the

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region covered by the Kuwait Action Plan; other protocols are under preparation for those regions and for the Mediterranean and the South-East Pacific. UNEP participation in the development of regional programmes for the Black Sea and the North-West Pacific will depend on the availability of additional funds.

32. Responding to the growing concern over the impacts of driftnet fishing, as expressed in General Assembly resolution 44/225 of 22 December 1989, UNEP has initiated a number of concrete actions to determine the environmental impacts of this fishing technique and to consider and adopt management measures. Efforts to address driftnet fishing by major agencies and bodies inside and outside the United Nations system are being co-ordinated through the Global Plan of Action for the Conservation, Management and Utilization of Marine Mammals, since the incidental catch of marine mammals is one of the major impacts of driftnet fishing.

33. If the deterioration of coastal areas is to be halted or reversed, a major effort will be required in the coming decade to improve the implementation of regional action plans and the adoption of concrete pollution control and resource management measures. This is another issue that the Governing Council may wish to bring to the attention of the Preparatory Committee for the 1992 Conference.

Protection of Land Resources

34. Two aspects of protection of land resources are addressed below, namely, combating desertification and the combating of deforestation.

Combating desertification

35. By its decision 15/23 of 25 May 1989, the Governing Council requested that an external evaluation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification (PACD) be conducted and that its results be presented well in time for the 1992 Conference, but not later than the sixteenth regular session of the Council in 1991. The General Assembly reinforced and broadened this decision in paragraph 6 of its resolution 44/172 A of 19 December 1989, in which it invited the Governing Council to undertake a general evaluation of progress in implementing the Plan of Action and present this as its contribution at the Conference in 1992. In addition, the General Assembly, in paragraph 7 of the resolution, requested the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Executive Director of UNEP, to submit to the Conference, through its Preparatory Committee, a report containing relevant expert studies inter alia on the financing of anti-desertification programmes. Additionally, the General Assembly decided, in paragraph 9 of the resolution, that the Consultative Group for Desertification Control (DESCON) will meet every year until the Conference in 1992 and reaffirmed the mandate of DESCON as contained in General Assembly resolutions 32/172 of 19 December 1977 and 39/168 of 17 December 1984.

36. For the general evaluation of progress in implementing PACD the Executive Director intends to submit a composite report containing as its main components chapters devoted to: (a) assessment of the global status of desertification; (b) evaluation of PACD; (c) progress in implementation of PACD by the United Nations system, Governments, the international community

and NGOs; (d) financing anti-desertification programmes; and (e) recommendations: PACD II to the year 2020. In addition, a self-contained expert report on the financing of anti-desertification programmes will also be available. These reports will be prepared with the assistance of several groups of international experts and in full co-operation with national Governments, FAO, Unesco, scientific institutions and major non-governmental organizations. As these two reports, except for the part on the evaluation of PACD, will in themselves be a synthesis of several support studies which are under preparation as component parts, the Executive Director anticipates that they will be ready by early 1992. The external report on the evaluation of the PACD will be submitted to the Governing Council at its sixteenth session, as requested by the Council.

37. The Executive Director will report progress in this regard to the Governing Council at its sixteenth session, as well as to the Preparatory Committee for the 1992 Conference.

Combating deforestation

38. The rate of deforestation is still increasing, despite current national and international efforts initiated during the past decade. Its economic, social, political and environmental consequences are, however, better known today than in the past. The deforestation in mountain areas and highlands or in the lowlands and coastal areas is not only affecting populations at local levels, but the population at large. Furthermore, we realize today that it is not correct to focus solely on tropical forests, as many developing and even developed countries in the temperate zones are also suffering from deforestation.

39. Two major initiatives have been launched during the past decade: first, the Tropical Forestry Action Plan, work on which was initiated at the request of the Governing Council in 1979 and then, under the guidance of the Council in decision 10/14, transferred to FAO in 1983; second, the International Tropical Timber Agreement of 1983 came into force in 1985. UNEP had an important role in promoting the inclusion of some environmental considerations in the framework of this agreement.

40. In 1986, the Executive Director held discussions with three of the countries owning nearly 50 per cent of the tropical forests, who presented their views on ways and means to enhance the protection of their forests. Following up on this, he contacted seven countries which are the major consumers of tropical timber in order to seek their views on approaches to increase such protection and management. None of the countries approached responded conclusively to his initiative.

41. Following the FAO/UNEP Tropical Forest Resources Assessment published in 1981, FAO is now preparing a new Global Assessment, the results of which are expected to be available by 1991. UNEP is collaborating in the identification of appropriate methodologies for the use of remote sensing and in particular the advanced very-high resolution radiometer (AVHRR) which allows mapping of large areas at relatively low cost.

42. UNEP has now initiated action to improve the decision makers' perception of the real value of forests through the preparation, in collaboration with the University of Minnesota, FAO and the World Bank, of a practical manual on assessment of forest value. Furthermore, UNEP has continued its collaboration in the implementation of the Tropical Forestry Action Plan and participated in selected national missions and in the overall reorientation of the Plan.

Conservation of Biological Diversity

43. By its decision 15/34, the Governing Council re-emphasized "the need to conserve biological diversity on Earth by, inter alia, the implementation of existing legal instruments and agreements in a co-ordinated and effective way and the adoption of a further appropriate international legal instrument, possibly in the form of a framework convention", and requested the Executive Director to convene "additional working sessions of the Ad Hoc Working Group of Experts on Biological Diversity to consider the technical content within a broad socio-economic context of a suitable new international legal instrument and other measures that might be adopted for the conservation of the biological diversity of the planet." In this decision, the Council also requested the Executive Director to expedite the work of the Working Group "with the aim of having the proposed new international legal instrument ready for adoption as soon as possible".

44. The second session of the Ad Hoc Working Group of Experts on Biological Diversity was convened in Geneva from 19 to 23 February 1990. While the Ad Hoc Working Group was not ready to begin negotiations on the legal instrument, it concluded that the instrument should aim to incorporate concrete and action-oriented measures for the conservation and sustainable utilization of biological diversity. Consequently, as much technical, financial and administrative content as possible, with commitments for implementation, will be included in the body of the draft framework instrument to be considered by an Ad Hoc Working Group of Legal and Technical Experts when it meets in November 1990. The instrument would probably have under its umbrella legally-binding protocols focusing on concrete issues. As far as possible, the convention and some of its protocols should be concluded and ready for adoption and signature at the time of the 1992 Conference. General agreement was reached during the meetings of the technical Working Group that:

(a) An international legal instrument without firm commitments to funding would be meaningless;

(b) Those who enjoy the most economic benefits from biological diversity should contribute equitably to its conservation and sustainable management;

(c) A new partnership should be developed and funding for developing countries should be characterized as co-operation among countries and, in providing sufficient new and additional funds in a spirit of common responsibility, the costs of conservation should not fall disproportionately upon countries with significant biological diversity; and

(d) There was a need to incorporate an innovative mechanism that facilitates access to resources and new technologies, including those in the private sector, and for this reason, whatever the final financial arrangements, there is a need for a special fund management mechanism as part of the legal international instrument.

45. The Group requested the Executive Director to commence several studies as a means of responding to specific issues in the process of developing the new legal instrument. These studies will cover the cost of conserving biodiversity; fund-raising mechanisms; and the relationship between intellectual property rights and access to genetic resources and biotechnology. The Executive Director has already initiated work on these

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studies, the early results of which he will put to the Working Group at its third session in Geneva from 9 to 13 July 1990, in the hope that most of the technical issues will be sufficiently settled for him to begin the actual process of negotiations on the legal instrument before the end of 1990. He will report on the progress made at the July 1990 session to the Council.

Environmentally Sound Management of Biotechnology

46. Modern biotechnology and its advanced techniques have considerable potential in the field of sustainable resource management. In recent years, biotechnology has been seen as the direct channel for developing countries to make practical use of their enormous biodiversity for economic development. Biotechnology promises increased plant productivity and global food security, increased energy production, mitigation or alleviation of health problems, and new and improved methods of conservation and evaluation of genetic resources and environmental management. The importance of biodiversity to the future of biotechnology cannot be over-emphasized. As the field of biotechnology develops, the scope of future germplasm needs will be far greater than at present. However:

(a) Most developing countries lack the necessary expertise and equipment to exploit genetic variation, and development of biotechnology has, therefore, historically been focused on the needs and priorities of industrialized societies;

(b) New technologies are mostly patented and the increasing dominance of the private sector in biotechnology has implications for access to advances in science and technology by developing countries;

(c) Advances in techniques and ideas for application are proceeding in the absence of appropriate regulatory control;

(d) Like any other technology, biotechnology might not be without negative environmental, health or socio-economic impacts.

47. To maximize the benefits and minimize the risks associated with biotechnology application, the international community is challenged to devise innovative mechanisms to:

(a) Ensure the transfer of and favourable access to biotechnology, including on a concessional, low-profit or non-profit basis;

(b) Facilitate the development of modern biotechnology and its application to problems of particular concern to developing countries;

(c) Anticipate the likely negative effects of biotechnology and develop appropriate national and international regulatory measures;

(d) Allow developing countries to obtain a portion of the economic and social returns generated from the use of their genetic diversity, as a means of achieving equity and as an incentive to conserve biological diversity; and

(e) Establish effective co-operation with reciprocal benefits between biotechnology-rich developed countries and gene-rich developing countries.

48. The Microbiological Resources Centre (MIRCEN) concept, conceived by UNEP in 1974, could be legitimately considered as the first international attempt to extend biotechnology to developing countries to tap their wealth of genetic resources. The establishment of an informal United Nations Industrial Development Organization/WHO/UNEP Working Group on Biotechnology Safety in 1986 is the first international effort to keep under review recent developments in this area and to formulate and guide the implementation of appropriate recommendations to minimize the environmental, health and socio-economic risks of biotechnology. The experience gained and the success of these exercises provide scope and encouragement for strengthening and expanding them. The full implications of new biotechnologies including - among others - the release of genetically engineered organisms and the use of genetic resources in biotechnology development, are expected to be taken into consideration in the proposed new legal instrument on biological diversity, as recommended by the Governing Council in its decision 15/34.

49. The Governing Council may wish to request the Executive Director to establish a working group of the appropriate organizations in the United Nations system and of governmental and non-governmental experts to consider the issues outlined above and propose appropriate actions by UNEP, other United Nations organizations and Governments for transmission to and consideration by the Preparatory Committee for the 1992 Conference.

Environmentally Sound Management of Hazardous Wastes and Toxic Chemicals

50. The situation with respect to activities for the environmentally sound management of hazardous wastes and toxic chemicals is outlined below in paragraphs 51 to 56.

Hazardous wastes

51. The Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal was adopted on 22 March 1989 by 116 States. As of end of May 1990, 54 States and the EEC had signed the Convention. The Convention will enter into force upon ratification by 20 States. At present, four States have ratified it. The Basel Conference also adopted nine resolutions calling for actions to support the implementation of the provisions of the Convention. The secretariat functions of the convention are being carried out on an interim basis by UNEP, until the completion of the first ordinary meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties. The Interim Secretariat, based in Geneva, commenced its activities in November 1989. Its main work is to implement the resolutions adopted by the Basel Conference on 22 March 1989, concentrating efforts as a priority on the following two activities: development of a protocol on liability; and the elaboration of technical guidelines for the environmentally sound management of wastes envisaged in the Convention.

52. The Convention represents a first step in defining the global means to reduce and strictly control the movement of hazardous wastes and to ensure that such wastes are disposed of in an environmentally sound manner. According to the Convention, the long-term goal is to reduce the generation of wastes to a minimum and to work on a world scale towards having disposal

facilities situated as close as possible to the generation site. It is regretted that States Parties to the Convention are not forthcoming with contributions to meet the cost of the Interim Secretariat, which threatens to endanger the implementation of the resolutions of the Basel Conference and the further action of the Secretariat. The Governing Council may wish to draw this to the attention of Governments who signed the Final Act and call on them to contribute immediately to the cost of the Interim Secretariat.

Toxic chemicals

53. By its decision 15/30 of 25 May 1989, the Governing Council adopted the amended London Guidelines for the Exchange of Information on Chemicals in International Trade, which incorporate provisions for prior informed consent (PIC). The PIC procedure establishes a system for formally obtaining and disseminating the decisions of importing countries as to whether they wish to receive future shipments of chemicals which have been banned or severely restricted. In a parallel development, the FAO Conference at its twenty-fifth session, from 16 to 30 November 1989, adopted a proposal for incorporating the principle of prior informed consent (PIC) into the FAO International Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides.

54. The Executive Director addressed a letter to all Governments inviting them to designate a national authority for participation in implementing the amended Guidelines. UNEP and FAO have developed a joint programme for implementing the PIC procedure and have established a joint UNEP/FAO data base of notifications, responses and related information on banned and severely restricted chemicals, as approved by the Governing Council.

55. As of the end of May 1990, a total of 55 national authorities designated by 46 Governments plus the Commission of the European Communities had been registered by the International Register of Potentially Toxic Chemicals (IRPTC) and 45 countries had responded to FAO.

56. The first list of chemicals subject to PIC, comprising those substances that have been banned or severely restricted in 10 or more countries, is being established and decision/guidance documents are being prepared. A study is being made of the feasibility of developing a legally binding treaty in this field.

Protection of Human Health Conditions and Quality of Life, Especially the Living and Working Environment of Poor People, from Degradation of the Environment

57. In a sense, the programmes of UNEP are geared to promote human well-being. UNEP's efforts are designed with the twin objectives in mind of alleviating environmental deterioration and stopping it at the source, and alleviating poverty. Two examples of efforts under way of being set up to achieve the goal of protecting human health and the quality of life are given below in paragraphs 58 to 63.

The AMCEN programme

58. As the Council is aware, the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) was conceived, designed and approved by African Governments. Adopted in Cairo in December 1985, the Cairo Programme for African Co-operation of AMCEN has made some progress in the structural as well as the programmatic aspects of its mandate.

59. AMCEN set up four committees, on deserts and arid lands, river and lake basins, forests and woodlands, and seas. Establishment of a fifth committee, on African island ecosystems, is under way. AMCEN also agreed on the setting up of eight networks, of which six have already been established: environmental monitoring; climatology; soils and fertilizers; water resources; energy; and, education and training. Arrangements for the initiation of the seventh and eighth networks, on genetic resources and on science and technology, are under way.

60. Although African Governments have clearly indicated at the national and regional levels their political support for and commitment to AMCEN, so far only a few African Governments have secured modest funds for their national pilot projects from their country indicative planning figures or other means. Donor countries were not very forthcoming with financial resources to assist in the implementation of the Cairo Programme. As a practical solution to this problem, the third session of AMCEN recommended the establishment of an AMCEN Trust Fund which would involve African Governments and external donors more seriously in funding the activities of AMCEN. Much more effort needs to be exerted to elicit financial support from donors. This is another issue that the Governing Council may wish to bring to the attention of the Preparatory Committee for the 1992 Conference.

Preparation of the draft Action Plan for the Environment for Latin America and the Caribbean

61. The Governing Council in its decision 15/17 of May 1989 requested the Executive Director to initiate, in consultation with the Governments of the region, the formulation of an Action Plan for the Environment for Latin America and the Caribbean. Accordingly, the Executive Director, with the full co-operation of UNDP, the Inter-American Development Bank, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and other agencies in the region, initiated the preparatory process and set up a Core Group of Agencies to work closely with UNEP. Two meetings of the Group have been held. The second meeting reviewed the first draft of the Action Plan for the Environment for Latin America and the Caribbean; a background paper on the principal environmental problems of the Latin America and Caribbean region; and a background paper on funding and co-ordination of environmental and resource management projects by major donor agencies and international lending institutions.

62. The above-mentioned drafts were discussed by the first meeting of advisers to UNEP on the preparation of the draft Action Plan, held at the headquarters of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) from 27 February to 2 March 1990. Fourteen national experts from the region participated in this review. The advisers responded favourably to the draft Action Plan.

63. An inter-agency meeting on the Action Plan for the Environment for Latin America and the Caribbean was held in Caracas in April 1990. This meeting had two objectives: to involve specialized international, regional, subregional and bilateral co-operation organizations in the review process of the draft Action Plan; and to encourage the participation of these agencies in the support for and implementation of the Action Plan, particularly in their areas

of specialization. Representatives of the agencies were presented with the working documents already considered by expert groups and the results of those meetings. Following all the above consultations, another draft of the Action Plan was prepared and considered by the Core Group in May 1990. It is now being completed for review by governmental experts before presentation to the Ministerial Meeting in October 1990 in Trinidad and Tobago.

II. ACROSS-THE-BOARD ISSUES

Availability of Resources for Developing Countries and Funding Mechanisms

64. No matter is more central to protecting the world's environment than additional financing. To meet existing and impending environment-development requirements, levels of new financial resources are needed far beyond any that exist today. Achieving this financing requires practical and innovative thinking about revenue-gathering methods and market incentives to bring a greater financial contribution to the environmental component of the environment-development package.

65. There is little evidence to date that the financial resources for the actions required to promote environmentally sound development will be made available. There is a serious lack of funding for protection of the environment.

66. There are three aspects to the financing of sustainable development needs. First, there is traditional development assistance. There are signs that this source is stagnating. Official Development Assistance as a percentage of the GNP of donor countries has levelled off at about 0.35 per cent -- about half the agreed 0.7 per cent target. Indeed, a reverse flow of payments has developed, reflecting debt repayments and other transfers. This outflow has increased substantially year by year, from $10.2 billion in 1984 to $43 billion in 1988. Changes in development assistance and the debt payment outflow are not expected to occur soon. Consequently, aid levels will at best meet basic developmental needs, and the financial options for developing countries are greatly constricted.

67. Second, developing countries must find financing specifically for the environmental portion of national sustainable development programmes, just to meet environmental conservation requirements that have not been met by traditional development assistance. The World Resources Institute/ United Nations Development Programme/International Conservation Financing Project report estimates that such requirements will amount to roughly $20 billion to $50 billion annually over the 1990s. The World Watch Institute calculates that total additional expenditures by developing countries for the environment and for debt retirement would be between $46 billion in 1990 and $149 billion in the year 2000.

68. Third, there are the new financial requirements to address emerging global environmental problems. No accurate estimates of finances required for these issues exist. The estimates of the developing countries' requirements for implementing the Montreal Protocol are the most advanced. They range from $2 billion to $7 billion over the period 1990-2008. Estimates for developing countries to deal with greenhouse gases are extremely rough, varying from $26 billion to $65 billion. Projected costs for conservation of biological diversity are being worked out at the technical level.

69. The effective participation of developing countries in environmental programmes is important for their management of their own resources and for addressing the global issues. While some important programmes exist, they are inadequate for future needs. In the face of debt and developmental priorities, most developing nations face hard priority judgements and in some cases doubt the wisdom of pursuing environmentally beneficial investments, particularly those related to global problems.

70. The negotiations under the Montreal Protocol illustrate the key issues. Developing countries insist on additional funds, not diversions from current development programmes. They want these funds in the form of grants or highly concessional loans, according to the situation. They want a financing mechanism that will provide equity and efficiency. They also want net incremental costs for global matters to be covered. They insist that financing be consistent with their own resource development objectives, not those imposed from outside. Finally, financing should be specific and based on the best scientific and technological alternatives available.

71. On the issues of "additionality" and "conditionality" there has been a large measure of agreement, though not yet consensus. Concerning incremental costs, discussions are still continuing on whether all such costs are to be met from a new multilateral fund or a mix of a new fund and existing multilateral and bilateral sources, and what should be the shares. What is now important is to reach a framework agreement, taking account of the costs involved, the sources of financing and the kinds of funding mechanism which could be put in place quickly.

72. Most of the discussion on financial mechanisms is taking place within the context of the Montreal Protocol and IPCC. In addition, however, the World Bank, at the request of France and the Federal Republic of Germany and under a mandate from the Bank's Committee, has prepared a discussion paper on funding for the global environment. The paper proposed a fund to finance environmental actions with a global implication, including ozone depletion, greenhouse gas emissions, water resource degradation and loss of biodiversity. It outlines the modalities of a Global Environmental facility, including the importance of additionality and of institutional arrangements involving co-ordination among the Bank, UNEP and UNDP. This proposal, which was discussed by donor countries in Paris in March 1990, indicates that concessional funding, amounting to at least 1 billion special drawing rights over three years should be raised on a voluntary basis and that management responsibility would be with the Bank, in consultation with UNEP and UNDP. While views have not fully crystallized on the proposal, the Development Committee has agreed that the Global Environmental Facility should be further considered.

73. Since August 1989, the Open-Ended Working Group of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol has been considering financial mechanisms to help developing countries implement the Protocol. Many developing countries urged the creation of a special fund to assist in the transition to CFC substitutes. Country-specific studies of the costs of making this transition have been undertaken. Agreement seems to be evolving on a financial mechanism to cover the incremental costs of implementing the Protocol. But the details and modalities of the fund are not yet finalized. A fund under the authority of the Contracting Parties, contributed to by developed countries, and a clearing-house mechanism for technical co-operation and for contributions of technology in kind have been worked out. It is hoped that agreement can be reached by the Second Meeting of the Contracting Parties in London in June 1990.

74. Other means of raising funds should also be considered. The Nordic Investment Bank's new Nordic Environmental Finance Corporation for funding joint private ventures in technology transfer to eastern and central Europe could be a model for use in other regions. The Executive Director has been exploring the potential of a "user's fee" and other economic instruments that

would help to raise funds internally and achieve better distribution of economic and environmental costs. Industrial, commercial and trade enterprises that profit from using natural resources would thus be presented with a great portion of the incremental costs of their activities. The user's fee could provide "automaticity", raise considerable funds for Governments to utilize for environmental matters and provide a more effective and efficient ecological control mechanism. Some such non-traditional mechanism might be used in response to the need for additional resources, and the Executive Director plans to further pursue this means of funding.

75. The urgent need for additional funding makes it essential to pursue all the alternatives of traditional and non-traditional sources, so that agreement can be reached as early as possible on a mechanism or mechanisms which can respond quickly and flexibly to the support required by developing countries to meet their own and the world's pressing environmental concerns.

76. A new situation has developed as a result of the changes in eastern and central Europe. The Executive Director senses a fear in the developing countries that part of the currently available, albeit inadequate, resources could be siphoned to eastern and central Europe. The West has an obligation to allay this fear.

77. The Governing Council may wish to bring these matters to the attention of the Preparatory Committee for the 1992 Conference and make recommendations that additional sources of funding for the environment be central to the Committee's deliberations and action plan.

Technology Transfer

78. The question of availability of resources for environmental protection and enhancement is closely linked to technology transfer and access to the know-how related to using the technology. It is a significant issue now and will continue to be so in the future.

79. We have seen important technical progress where the technology is appropriate and available development assistance has facilitated the transfer of some needed technology. In other instances, the economic cost of the environmentally sound technology has turned out to be lower than that of the polluting technologies and the market has spurred on the exchange.

80. But these limited successes are only indicative of future needs. The magnitude of the task ahead must not be underestimated. The issue involves legal obligations with respect to patents, licences, designs, marks and proprietary rights and the receiving country's ability to absorb new technology and know-how and obtain training to apply it.

81. The developed countries cannot expect the developing and least-developed countries to deny themselves the benefits of ozone layer depleting substances or of fossil fuel or firewood energy, or to leap-frog this stage in their industrial development, unless the developed countries are prepared to transfer their technology and intellectual property on a concessionary basis. Our economic system and aid programmes must be stimulated to address this urgent situation. Experience with the Montreal Protocol suggests that success in the transfer of technology and know-how will in large part depend on the introduction of new approaches and modalities for the exchange of technology and to enhance the flow of financial resources upon which the transfer relies.

We will discuss this issue at the meetings under the Montreal Protocol in London in June. Like the question of additional funding, it will also have a major impact on climate change, bio-diversity and hazardous wastes.

82. Access to the patents and intellectual properties pertaining to the relevant technology is one central ingredient to enable countries to establish production facilities of their own choice. Much of the technology is owned by private firms who developed the technology in the first place. They are motivated by a profit and are willing to surrender the technology for a profit. In such cases, proprietary rights must be purchased or licensed. Yet the issue of how great the profit should be must be squarely addressed because of the significant role these technologies play in protecting human health, even life itself.

83. In some cases, national legislation can be applied in some countries to bring about the transfer of these rights because of a supervening interest, such as the protection of national security, human health, and the public interest. There does not yet appear to be any authority to act on behalf of the supervening interests of planetary protection or management.

84. As one important step, the Executive Director has discussed with the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) the possibilities and implications of patent laws in relevant countries. WIPO has provided UNEP with a study on substances controlled by the Montreal Protocol which are patented in various countries, and WIPO is developing another study on patent laws and licences pertaining to technology transfer.

85. WIPO and the Open-Ended Working Group of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol have discussed the possibility of compulsory licensing. Not a common practice, in some countries it is possible for the Government to use a given patent in the public interest for reasons of human health or national security, providing fair compensation. In most instances, compulsory licensing with the right to use the patent is allowed only in the country where the patent was registered. The Working Group is considering the possibility of recommending the use of patents by Governments that are Parties to the Montreal Protocol under compulsory licensing, in order to protect human health. Depending on studies by WIPO and further consideration, the Working Group might consider, among other things, to which extent and under what conditions patents can be made available to others through negotiations and/or legislative measures, or the possibility of transferring patents to an international organization or institution to benefit all countries.

86. Access to know-how is a second essential ingredient for successful technology transfer. Market mechanisms can provide significant technology transfer, but they will almost certainly not be enough to satisfy the demand and equity needed. Market mechanisms may not be effective in some countries. To assure access to available information and know-how about regular technology assessment, an inventory of available technology and related know-how could be established. Collection and distribution of information can be accomplished through assessment panel reports, awareness workshops, dissemination of technical information, and provision of consultants and technology.

87. Other considerations include a country's capacity to absorb and deploy the technology sought, the risks of the technology, its use by competing companies or countries, the economic feasibility, the priority a country would place on addressing the environmental issue in question, and resources available to facilitate the transfer.

88. In some cases, market mechanisms might have to be modified by changes in the legal or taxation frameworks to aid the freer transfer of technology. In these and other circumstances the views of industry are vital. The Executive Director has had fruitful discussions on the ozone issue with the International Chamber of Commerce and other commercial and industrial groups.

89. In light of the importance and widespread nature of the various issues related to the transfer of technology, the Governing Council may wish to bring them to the attention of the Preparatory Committee for the 1992 Conference and recommend that it review and consider them in detail. Development agencies and financing institutions can contribute effectively to such consideration.

Use of space technology

90. UNEP must also be looking to take advantage of evolving world developments. The recent and rapid political changes in eastern Europe and the USSR offer the promise of making new data and technologies available for environmental purposes. For example, space technology, which was developed largely for military purposes may now be made available in greater proportions for peaceful uses, particularly in the monitoring and assessment of the Earth's resources and of environmental trends and impacts.

91. For a number of years the Global Environmental Monitoring System (GEMS) programme has used data from Earth-observation satellites in national resource monitoring programmes. In the last five years, the Global Resource Information Database (GRID) programme has begun to provide Governments, UNEP and its co-operating agencies with the means to analyse satellite data and to combine them with data from other sources for integrated descriptions and analyses of environmental conditions, trends and interactions.

92. If we are able to obtain greater access to new and additional sources of data and technologies for environmental purposes, GRID can contribute more effectively to rational resource management and environmental planning for development on global and national scales. This approach could be fully global, since these space technologies are developed in several countries, including a number of developing countries. The current easing of tension between East and West is expected to lead to some release of resources from arms expenditure, which could be used to further the application of these technologies for peaceful uses.

93. Once GRID's planned network of six regional centres is in place, supplying national and intergovernmental bodies with data, providing data analysis for environmental problem solving and training support in relevant technologies, the free and open exchange of space-derived and other environmental data would be assured between East and West and between North and South. The network would also enable GRID to contribute more effective data to Earthwatch and to assist in technological capacity building for environmental assessment, including early warning, most especially for the developing countries.

94. The Governing Council may wish to request the Executive Director to prepare a study on the issue of technology transfer, together with the related issues of additional financing, and use of space technology as a major topic for the ministerial-level plenary portion of the Governing Council's sixteenth session.

Environment and Economics

95. In recent years it has become increasingly clear that, if we are to make a significant advance in environmental quality, we must incorporate environmental considerations into our economic thinking and approaches. Economic development must be solidly based on the stocks of natural capital that sustain it. Tools of environmental analysis must be introduced into the economic process, and market mechanisms must be made to respond to environmental needs. Environmental indicators must be shaped so that they measure progress in protecting the environment as well as demonstrate economic gain. Because environmental factors are not adequately included in the economic processes, these processes and the market give misleading signals, recording financial gains where in fact long-term economic losses are occurring.

96. UNEP's principal focus in this field of activity has been to encourage the development and strengthening of environmental institutions and better integrate environmental factors into sectoral policies and activities. We have sought in particular to help developing countries to develop environment institutions, tailor environmental policies and projects and broaden the use of available tools, such as environmental impact assessment, environmental cost-benefit analysis and environmental accounting, in an effort to achieve environmentally sound and sustainable development.

97. It is now evident that the effects of sectoral development policies have significant environmental impacts. Interventions in one policy area can have unintended and unexpected effects in another: agricultural policies may induce farmers to occupy margin forests and woodlands, or to use excessive quantities of pesticides and fertilizers, or waste scarce water. Thus, a much greater effort to address this policy impact at the sectoral level is required in the years ahead.

98. UNEP's concern has also been focused on measuring environmental trends and indicators of change. This is essential if we are to be able to evaluate how well we are doing in achieving environmental protection and the proper management of environmental resources, as well as in fulfilling international commitments. UNEP's regular state of the environment reports have been an important tool in this respect. Serious consideration is now being given by a number of heads of specialized agencies and bodies of the United Nations system, spearheaded by UNEP and Unesco, to developing and publishing on an annual or biennial basis an environmental statement addressed to Heads of State or Government, bringing to their attention one of the major emerging global environmental problems and making proposals for addressing it. A feasibility study was prepared by Unesco and the issue was discussed by DOEM and the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination. The Director General of Unesco and the Executive Director of UNEP are working together closely on this subject.

99. Likewise, our efforts in co-operation with other United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations have been to develop natural resource accounting techniques to help policy makers achieve proper economic indicators for sustainable development. UNEP is monitoring physical indicators, while

the World Bank and the United Nations Statistical Office are monitoring economic and financial indicators. The two approaches will be combined to monitor environmentally sound development. UNEP is also involved in accounting approaches that adjust traditional national economic accounts, which do not properly reflect true economic wealth because they fail to measure what happens to the resource base and environmental values, and is taking part in the development of separate satellite accounts. Other organizations, e.g. OECD, are doing important work developing indicators to assist in the integration of environmental and economic decision-making.

100. Another increasingly important set of economic instruments comprises those related to the market, in particular instruments to identify and correct "market failures". Such instruments are particularly significant as market-based economic systems gain prominence, as in central and eastern Europe and in parts of the Third World. Pricing policies are critical. Unless prices for raw materials and products reflect their environmental and social costs, the national resource base will be exploited, pollutants will be disposed of cost-free, and environmental problems will increase. The "polluter pays" principle has been a conerstone of this kind of economic instrument. Government subsidies, like water pricing policies, often encourage over-use of natural and environmental resources, and are examples of an area in which more study and action is needed. Another such area is marketable emission rights.

101. Taxation for environmental benefits is another policy instrument on which more work is required. Although there is strong public dislike of taxes, "eco-taxes", or charges or users' fees are being considered for environmental management objectives. Similarly, more work is needed on the economics of transfrontier pollution in terms of the downstream effects on the affected party. Account must be taken of the new interest in facilitating the flow of capital and environmentally sound technology to developing and eastern European countries to assist them in protecting the environment.

102. UNEP has become more aware of the effects that environmental regulations have on trade; the introduction of "green consumer" arrangements in some countries could create non-tariff trade barriers requiring international consultation and co-operation. UNEP initiated discussions with the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development on this matter. This issue needs to be fully discussed in joint forums with these two organizations in order to avoid or minimize undesirable trade impacts. Product standards and harmonized regulations may also be considered.

103. A priority economic consideration is the relationship between environment and the external debt in developing countries. Debt is the most urgent problem facing African and Latin American and Caribbean countries. Debt problems will have to be resolved to allow these countries to address poverty and ecological decline. With little else to fall back on, the resource-based economies are using up their ecological capital and natural resources to pay their debts. Nor are structural adjustment programmes without environmental costs. Donor countries and institutions must take full account of environmental and natural resource considerations in their policies, programmes and projects.

104. Donor countries for their part, should give much closer consideration to debt-for-nature swaps. These swaps involve the purchase of developing country debt at discounted values in the secondary debt market and the cancelling of the debt in return for environment-related activities on the part of the debtor nation. They are a new financing instrument for conservation and can prove beneficial for the preservation of habitats, forest areas and other sensitive areas. They will not in themselves solve either the debt or the environmental problem. But they can make an important contribution to alerting policy makers and decision makers to the accelerating environmental degradation of unique and fragile areas and can also improve the climate for environmental management in general.

105. Structural adjustment programmes are becoming a major part of the activities of international lending institutions. Under these, programmes, loans that bring about changes in pricing, taxation, subsidies and other reforms have a great impact on the environment and natural resources, even more than most individual projects, by altering resource prices, subsidies and expenditures that can cause environmental damage. Sustainable natural resource and environmental management has only recently begun to be addressed explicitly as part of adjustment lending operations. In these programmes, Governments and multilateral development banks must increasingly take full account of the opportunities to protect the environment and natural resources.

106. The growing linkages between environment and economics need much greater attention from UNEP, individually and in co-operation with governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. The Governing Council may see fit to recommend that the Preparatory Committee for the 1992 Conference review and consider possible actions on the basis of the views presented by the Executive Director and the comments made by the Governing Council thereon.

Developing the Capacity to address Environmental Issues at the National and Local Levels

107. As attention has increasingly focused on global environmental issues, and in particular on those now emerging, there has been greater appreciation that action on those issues and others as yet unresolved must, after all, take place primarily at the national and local levels. Most problems should be identified and the necessary action devised and implemented at those levels.

108. Most basic development decisions are made in various sectoral departments of government. Mutual co-operation between those departments and national environmental machineries must be enhanced. Various specialized agencies of the United Nations system, e.g. FAO, Unesco, UNIDO have an important role in advising and supporting sectoral departments of Governments. National government environmental institutions must have sound technical knowledge and competence to act effectively with sectoral departments and ministries.

109. Experience since the 1972 Stockholm Conference has shown that the existence of appropriate national environmental legislation and decision-making machinery is of fundamental importance in this respect. Many developing countries have had difficulty in drawing up, adopting and applying basic environmental law. Model laws have been drafted as examples. This approach has been used with success in other fields (e.g. shipping legislation). The environment is, however, so broad that basic environmental legislation has to be very closely tailored to the situation in each country.

110. A primary role of UNEP's programme should be to help reinforce national administrations in playing the role required of them. UNEP must also maintain a data bank on basic national environmental legislation and encourage the exchange of legislative experience among countries.

111. UNEP's central role should be strengthened considerably in the years ahead to helping developing countries to develop their indigenous capacity to formulate environmental policies, programmes, and projects, incorporate the environmental component into developmental activities, develop environmental legislation and institutions, provide training, employ the tools of environment impact assessment and geographical information systems and raise funds.

III. STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT REPORT 1992

112. In its decision 15/13 A, the Governing Council requested the Executive Director to prepare an analytical report on changes in the state of the world environment for presentation to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development to be held in 1992, and a comprehensive report on the state of the environment, covering the decade since the Council's session of a special character, held at Nairobi in 1982, for submission to the Council at its seventeenth regular session in 1993. The General Assembly decided in resolution 44/228 of 22 December 1989 that the 1992 Conference should, inter alia, examine the state of the environment and the changes that have occurred since the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment.

113. The Executive Director, after consultations with senior advisors, DOEM, the Committee of Permanent Representatives and senior UNEP staff, developed the structure for the above-mentioned report. A brief analytical version of the report will be presented to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, and the comprehensive report will be submitted to the Governing Council at its seventeenth session in 1993. The report will have the following structure:

- Part I: Introduction.

- Part II: The State of the Environment, "The Main Issues". This part consists of ten chapters on the main areas of general concern.

- Part III: Impact of Development and Socio-Economic Policies on the Environment and Impact of Environmental Degradation on Development. This part presents the inter-relationship between human activities and the environment. It comprises four chapters on agriculture and food production, industry, population growth and human settlements, and transport.

- Part IV: Environmental Quality, Human Health and Well-Being. This part consists of a chapter on the impact of environmental degradation on human health and living conditions as the centre piece of environmental protection activities.

- Part V: Responses to Changes in the Environment. Four chapters provide a review and an assessment of the response of different levels of society to the environmental problems since 1972: individual scientific and technical communities, national Governments, international organizations and the United Nations system.

- Part VI: Challenges and Future Outlook. This part consists of two chapters. One describes the international economic and political framework within which environmental protection activities must be undertaken and describes the evolution of this framework, and the other describes an agenda for the future and the efforts and actions needed to meet successfully the major environmental challenges of the 1990s and beyond.

114. The Executive Director has identified authors in the different environmental fields, and has invited them to draw up a three-page presentation on each of the 21 chapters of the report. The authors have been selected on the basis of wide geographical balance. The presentations will be reviewed by a group of selected experts in Geneva in July 1990 and the result of its work will constitute the annotated structure, the last step prior to the drafting of the report. The results of this meeting will be reported to the Council t its special session.

115. The first draft of the 1992 state-of-the-environment report is expected to be circulated to experts and Governments for comments around June 1991. However, the Executive Director will report to the Governing Council at its sixteenth session on the progress in the preparation of the report.

IV. REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL TO THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE 1992 CONFERENCE ON THE WORK OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM IN THE AREAS TO BE ADDRESSED BY THE CONFERENCE

116. The Designated Officials for Environmental Matters are preparing the draft report of the Secretary-General, structured in the following way:

(a) Relationship of environment problems to development issues and problems addressed;

(b) Environment and development objectives of organizations involved to address the above-mentioned environment and development issues, with a brief description of responsibilities and the co-ordination mechanism;

(c) Major ongoing activities in relation to the specific objectives and goals of the organizations involved;

(d) Major activities requiring acceleration or enhancement;

(e) Gaps and areas necessitating priority action.

117. The draft report draws on the integrated approach to environment and development, on the analysis of issues, the outlook, goals and recommended action of the Environmental Perspective to the Year 2000 and Beyond, adopted by the General Assembly in resolution 42/186 of 11 December 1987, and on the objectives of the system-wide medium-term environment programme for the period 1990-1995, which itself was prepared using the Environmental Perspective as a guide. The draft covers the nine major environmental issues identified for concentration by the Governing Council, and subsequently also by the General Assembly resolution convening the Conference, as well as the across-the-board issues identified therein and which emerged in the analysis.

V. STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF UNEP AND THE GOVERNING COUNCIL

118. Given the mounting international interest in and activity on the environment, it is essential that UNEP, as the central organization of the United Nations dealing with the environment, be strengthened. The environment generally and UNEP in particular should have a much more prominent, visible place in the United Nations. At a time when the environment enjoys a high profile among top leaders in Governments, industry, international organizations, NGOs and among peoples, UNEP should be sufficiently strengthened to enable it to respond to the high expectations of the international community. Although the Governing Council at its fifteenth session, in its decision 15/1, adopted several measures to strengthen UNEP's role, much more remains to be done.

The Governing Council

119. The role of UNEP would be strengthened by augmenting and expanding the role of its policy-making organ, the Governing Council. This could be done by one or more measures outlined in the following paragraphs.

Expanding the membership of the Governing Council

120. Given the increased interest in the environment and the growing number of emerging global environmental issues, it might be advisable to expand the membership of the Governing Council so as to give it wider representation of all the regions. Global accord on the environment can only be reached through consensus and to achieve such unity, as many Governments as possible should be involved in the deliberations of the Governing Council.

Executive committee of the Governing Council

121. As will be recalled, the Governing Council at its fifteenth session in May 1989 took up the question of an executive or standing committee of the Council. In its decision 15/1, section II, the Council decided, on an experimental basis, to mandate the Bureau of its fifteenth session to meet with the bureaux of counterpart organs of the specialized agencies and other organs of the United Nations to develop more positive and collaborative relationships. The Council further invited the Executive Director, in the light of experience gained and in consultation with Governments and the Committee of Permanent Representatives, to develop and put forward specific proposals for a standing committee, including its membership, functions and financial implications, for consideration by the Governing Council at its sixteenth regular session. The initial experiment has proved to be extremely useful, and the Executive Director will be submitting concrete proposals on this subject to the Council at its sixteenth regular session, in May 1991.

Addressing regional issues

122. The Governing Council may wish to set aside one day of each regular session to address issues of particular relevance to one of the five regions represented on the Governing Council. This may help the Council to focus its deliberations on the real and pressing needs of the regions.

Verifying the implementation of international environmental legal instruments

123. With the increase in the number of international environmental legal instruments - conventions, protocols and agreements - since the Stockholm Conference, and considering the fact that more are currently in the making, the Governing Council may wish to consider whether or not the time has come to address the issue of closely monitoring their implementation, and the means or modalities to do so. The Council may wish to recommend that this function be carried out by the Council or by experts designated by it or, perhaps more appropriately, may invite the contracting parties to these treaties to establish efficient mechanisms for verifying their implementation. The council may wish to request the Executive Director to study the matter and submit to its next regular session a report on the modalities of achieving this objective.

Conflict avoidance, conciliation and resolution

124. With increased environmental awareness, man's activities that affect nature and their consequent socio-economic impact will give rise to actual or potential conflict that will need to be resolved at the local, national, regional or global levels. Environmental problems and degradation transcend national boundaries, and the use of natural resources in contiguous areas or areas beyond national jurisdiction without regard for the rights of others is especially prone to conflict. Instances come immediately to mind of water shared by two or more States, the dumping of waste and air pollution emanating from industrial facilities in one territory and affecting other territories.

125. There is also growing concern that environmental standards currently in force in developed countries act as a barrier to products from many developing countries. If conflict is to be avoided, a mechanism should be established to review jointly such standards for the mutual benefit of consumers and producers. Environmental standards should not be seen as economic barriers. Differences between two or more States have to be handled co-operatively and settled amicably, in the interest of balancing the requirements of today and tomorrow, and the benefits for present and future generations. Up to now, environmental diplomacy and action have been a unifying factor even among warring or potentially warring parties. Such diplomacy will need to be intensified in the next phase of environmental action and co-operation, and extended beyond the national level to the regional and international levels.

126. At the national level, there have already been strains in relations between local communities and industrial facilities. The favourable effects of such industrial plants - whether on the national economy, as measured in terms of foreign exchange earned and employment - are outweighed by emissions discharged into the air or water, or impacts on other resources common to the local communities. Such conflicts are on the increase and are being faced at the local level and dealt with in local or national courts, or through the political process. Such incidents could cause internal instability and they therefore need to be resolved within the context of cultural, economic and social priorities and of political accountability by each concerned state.

127. In certain circumstances, means of settling disputes have already been defined, for example, within the framework of the Charter of the United Nations or within other agreements. While those means remain and may be utilized as necessary, the Governing Council may wish to address ways and

means of how conflicts that touch on specific environmental matters could be responded to quickly through assistance in structuring bilateral and multilateral negotiations, conciliation, arbitration, adjudication, or other agreed means of conflict resolution.

128. At the fifteenth session of the Governing Council, the Executive Director outlined the possibility of establishing an international environmental dispute arbitration system, and stated that "good offices by an intergovernmental body such as the Governing Council cannot be the whole solution to mediating in environmental disputes, and recourse to an internationally recognized panel of arbitrators, as exists in other domains (e.g. Permanent Court of Arbitration, International Council for Commercial Arbitration), should be made possible. The idea would be to provide mediation and/or arbitration, upon request or in situations defined by the provisions of treaties, in a manner acceptable to all parties to a potential dispute, by persons of recognized competence and repute in regard to environmental matters." 2/ This approach to conflict resolution has yet to be endorsed.

129. The Council may now wish to consider whether or not it is time to set in place some terms of reference and a mechanism for mediation and/or arbitration that States, bodies and individuals could activate as needed. The Bureau of the Council may wish to keep an eye on such issues, in concert with the Executive Director. Could a task force or panel be named, comprising a broad range of experts (lawyers, economists, industrialists, ecologists and appropriately qualified individuals selected by Governments and the Executive Director, from whom a team of up to five or more, depending on the complexity of an issue, could be charged with such responsibility?

130. Who could set such a mechanism in motion - the Bureau of the Governing Council, the Executive Director, an involved party or one likely to be affected, a regional body of which an affected State is a member, or an international body with special knowledge of the matter under dispute, or with political clout in one form or another, e.g. the United Nations General Assembly, the Security Council or a world ecological council? The involvement of the Governing Council in such an exercise would further enhance the Council's role.

Special session of the Governing Council

131. The General Assembly, in resolution 44/228 of 22 December 1989 on convening the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, decided that the Conference be held to coincide with World Environment Day on 5 June 1992. In accordance with past practice, the report of the Conference is to be considered by the General Assembly of the United Nations, which at its forty-seventh session will need to take appropriate action on the recommendations contained therein. The outcome and, in particular, the recommendations of the Conference are expected to be of substantial relevance to the organizations of the United Nations system, as these latter deal with environmental issues, to UNEP in particular as the main United Nations organ for the environment, and to existing capacities and institutional structures, which may require reinforcement in light of the outcome. Accordingly, the

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2/ UNEP/GC.15/5, paragraph 27 (c).

Governing Council may wish to provide the General Assembly with its views on the outcome and recommendations of the Conference, views which could be taken into account by the General Assembly when it considers the report of the Conference. The Governing Council may wish therefore to consider convening a special one-week session in 1992 following the 1992 Conference. On the other hand, the Council may wish to hold a special one-week session in 1992 prior to the Conference in order to review some of the issues and reports to the Conference so that the Conference would have the benefit of the Council's views on those matters. The Executive Director will present a more detailed proposal, based on the Council's deliberations at its forthcoming special session, to the Governing Council at its sixteenth session, in 1991.

The Secretariat

132. To face the challenges before the environmental community, challenges identified and defined by the Governing Council and the General Assembly, the secretariat of UNEP must be strengthened, without, however, in a way transforming it into a large bureaucracy. In this respect, special emphasis could be placed on UNEP's regional presence. Morever, in the years ahead there should be considerable strengthening of UNEP's central role in assisting developing countries in: developing indigenous capacities to formulate environmental policies, programmes and projects; incorporating an environmental component into developmental activities; developing environmental legislation and institutions; training; applying environmental impact assessment and geographical information systems; and fund raising.

Co-ordination

133. A strengthened role for UNEP, commensurate with the growing importance of the environment and understanding of the environment-development relationship, requires that greater influence be exercised upon and stronger policy impulses be given to international bodies addressing economic and development issues, and vice-versa. At the inter-secretariat level, mechanisms exist for co-ordination in the field of the environment. Three of them are serviced by UNEP - DOEM; Committee of International Development Institutions on the Environment; and the Ecosystem Conservation Group. These three mechanisms have been tested over the years and have proved to be extremely useful. Yet the full use of these mechanisms is handicapped by the lack of resources. The Governing Council may wish to recommend that, in the preparation of the next biennum budget, adequate financial provisions be made to ensure the best use of these bodies.

134. UNEP's co-ordinating role should be exercised not just at the inter-secretariat level but, even more importantly, at the level of intergovernmental organs. The Governing Council has already initiated action in this regard when, at its fifteenth session in its decision 15/1, section II, it mandated its Bureau, on an experimental basis, to meet with the bureaux of the counterpart organs of the specialized agencies and other organs of the United Nations in order to develop more positive and collaborative relationships. Although the experiment got off to a slow start, because Bureau meetings had to be scheduled to meet the timetable of other organizations, the results of the initial meetings have been extremely positive.

135. As another measure to increase co-ordination at the level of intergovernmental organs, the Council might wish to consider the value of the Council holding joint meetings of at least two days' duration with the UNDP Governing Council to exchange views on integration of environmental concerns in development planning, and matters to strengthen the relationship between environment and development.

136. There is also need for more effective co-ordination and direct relations with regional intergovernmental bodies, particularly OECD, the EEC, the Organization of African Unity and the like. The changing circumstances of relations between the countries of eastern and western Europe, the current assessment of the environmental situation in eastern Europe, and the contemplated establishment of banking and other financial mechanisms to accelerate development in that area provide opportunities for substantive consultation and, possibly, joint approaches on some matters touching on the environment.

UNEP Visibility

137. If UNEP and its Governing Council are to be strengthened, more than additional financial support is needed. The secretariat and the Governing Council must become more efficient and more effective. They must not only make an impact on the environment, but they must be seen to have made such an impact. UNEP - its Governing Council and the secretariat - would benefit from increased visibility. Several proposals for increasing the visibility of UNEP are advanced in the following paragraphs.

A United Nations centre for urgent environmental assistance

138. Recent examples of large-scale environmental catastrophes, such as those at Bhopal, Chernobyl, and involving the Exxon Valdez, provide clear evidence that, with the increased scale of industrial production and transportation, the risk of accidents leading to transboundary environmental degradation has increased. Measures to mitigate such events should be enforced by all available means. In addition, international co-operation for assistance in cases of natural disasters such as floods and earthquakes should be strengthened.

139. In recognition of this, the Governing Council at its fifteenth session adopted decision 15/10 on the United Nations Centre for Urgent Environmental Assistance. As requested in the decision, the Executive Director invited Governments and United Nations bodies and agencies to comment on the need for and possible functions of the proposed centre. As of the end of May, responses had been received from 38 Governments and 22 agencies. In general, the responses expressed strong support for improving international co-operation in dealing with environmental emergencies. Several alternatives for establishing a new centre were proposed, while many suggestions were made regarding the possible functions of and institutional arrangements for such a centre. A number of Governments and agencies urged that existing programmes be carefully examined before a final decision is taken.

140. In order to consolidate the position of the United Nations system vis-à-vis the proposed centre, an exploratory meeting will be held on 16 and 17 July 1990. Many agencies, including the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator, the International Atomic Energy Agency, WHO, WMO, the International Maritime Organization, UNDP and the World Bank, together with selected experts will be invited to consider an analysis of Governments' and agencies' comments and a preliminary report on existing activities and on the capacity of the United Nations system to respond to environmental emergencies.

141. The meeting is expected to provide guidance for an in-depth feasibility study on the proposed centre, including the nature of environmental emergencies to be addressed, alternatives to be considered, possible institutional arrangements, functions, scope of activities and operational questions. The Executive Director will report on the outcome of the meeting to the Governing Council at its special session.

Early warning of risks of environmental deterioration

142. Worldwide, vast amounts of environmental information are being amassed and accessed through Earthwatch. It is, however, recognized that quicker turn-around and better organized reporting are crucial to the more rapid provision of information for action than the usual publications or use of experts. Earthwatch will consolidate its assimilation of and access to existing mechanisms, in order to provide better early warning of impending environmental problems, giving priority initially to major environmental issues and relying largely on existing science groups and data acquisition systems.

143. What represents "early" is being precisely clarified. A thirty-year lag has proved helpful in creating awareness and initiating international action planning for global climate change; two years could point to a new front of deforestation; a few months can point to a likely locust outbreak; a few hours are all that is needed for a typhoon. It is suggested that reporting be limited to events with a time frame of a year or more and that, as far as possible, the cycle of Earthwatch early warnings correspond to the cycle of UNEP Governing Council sessions. Most other phenomena will be in the purview of the proposed United Nations centre for urgent environmental assistance in environmental emergencies, bearing in mind that early warning of a short-term disaster is either nearly impossible or is covered by existing mechanisms outside the United Nations system.

144. No miracles are envisaged and activities will be limited by the technology and resources available. There will, however, be no excuse for not co-ordinating on the international scene the information which is currently, in theory, obtainable, but which in practice is largely unavailable for timely warning where action is anticipated. Again, consultations on this issue will take place in July 1990 and the Executive Director will report to the Council on the results.

World environment academy

145. The idea of the creation of a world environment academy (WEA) was discussed at the informal ministerial consultation convened by the Executive Director in January 1989 and was reiterated in the second consultation in January 1990. The concept was received in principle with interest and approval, and further discussions are clarifying it. The academy, which should be a forum of excellence in the environmental field, would succeed only if the following major objectives can be met:

(a) The leading environmentalists of the world should be brought together to propose action on emerging environmental issues. The notion "environmentalist" should be taken in a broad sense, including experts in industry, energy, agriculture, legal matters, etc;

(b) The academy should be so structured that it could provide an important input in strengthening the research capabilities of the developing countries;

(c) The academy should play an important role in training and in the exchange of experience and technology between all involved constituencies.

146. The idea of the academy is still in the formative stage and, as there is as yet no definite blueprint for it, the Executive Director is convening a meeting of experts in July 1990 to develop the idea further. The academy should not be an isolated undertaking in the contemporary world but, on the contrary, should be closely linked to existing structures which undertake and can enlarge and extend services relevant to the goals of the academy. For this reason close linkages are envisaged with the bodies of the United Nations system such as Unesco, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, the United Nations University and others, as well as with appropriate bodies outside the United Nations system, for example, the Third World Academy, the International Council of Scientific Unions/Scientific Committee on Problems of the Environment (ICSU/SCOPE), and the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis.

Assessment of environmental impacts of United Nations activities

147. The United Nations system carries out a vast array of development and technical co-operation activities, providing assistance to the developing countries by way of policy advice, institution strengthening, training and human resource development, programme development, project design and implementation and supplementary finance for development. The activities are sectoral (e.g. agriculture, industry), multi-sectoral and trans-sectoral (e.g. economic policy and planning). They are national, regional or may even have a global dimension.

148. Although the United Nations system advocates sustainable development as a matter of policy, there are in practice meagre institutional mechanisms, procedures and methodological frameworks to ensure that the developmental work of the United Nations system and bodies is environmentally sound. Even when such procedures exist in some funding institutions, countries may feel that what is advocated as being environmentally sound in a development project or programme is unacceptable conditionality. Further, there is a need to ensure comparability in the methodology and procedure used by the United Nations system for the environmental assessment of development. There is also a complementary need to promote training within the developing countries on the use of such methodology and procedures.

149. Could UNEP assume responsibility for environmental assessment studies of the programmes, activities and projects carried out by United Nations bodies and agencies, with a corresponding reinforcement of its responsibility for the methodological guidance and co-ordination of institution strengthening and training? This might greatly assist the bodies and agencies in implementing their own expert responsibilities to promote environmentally sound development. This idea may, however, require further detailed study and consideration.

Volunteers for the environment: a green brigade

150. Today, people everywhere seek ways to make a direct or personal contribution to the environment. Mobilizing such commitment and directing it towards specific activities could also enhance the image of UNEP and its visibility.

151. It would be useful to develop a list of specific actions and "how to" methods and make such information widely available. Such a list could have a section on actions for communities (composting of green waste, limiting of motorized vehicles, etc.) and actions for individuals. Clearly, many actions would require efforts at both the community and individual levels. One major objective for action could be tree planting. People could plant trees, communities could provide seedlings, and private enterprises and/or philanthropic individuals could help support the costs. Such actions have recently caught the imagination of people in some countries, including the United States and the USSR. Nurturing the trees they have planted and ensuring their survival could help people feel they are making a direct contribution towards protecting and enhancing the human environment.

152. People could also organize "green brigades" to help maintain their local environments. UNEP could develop and publicize kits on how this could be done, and thus launch a world-wide green brigade movement with young people, the future beneficiaries of a better environment, as the mainstay.

The Environment Fund

153. The General Assembly, in resolution 2997 (XXVII) of 15 December 1972, decided to establish the Environment Fund "in order to provide for additional financing for environment programmes". Within this resolution the General Assembly also decided "that in order to enable the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme to fulfil its policy-guidance role for the direction and co-ordination of environmental activities, the Environment Fund shall finance wholly or partly the costs of the new environmental initiatives undertaken within the United Nations system ... and such other environmental activities as may be decided upon by the Governing Council ...".

154. Although the resources contributed to the Environment Fund were insufficient for the Fund to fulfil its designated role, as set out in the above-mentioned resolution, it has, since its establishment, had a significant influence in catalysing environmental activities. There is no doubt that, through the Environment Fund, environmental activities have been implemented that would otherwise not have been carried out. The Fund has contributed significantly to a greater awareness of current global environmental problems, not only through public information programmes, but also through support that has permitted attendance by representatives of developing countries at important environmental meetings and by involving these countries in Earthwatch, regional seas action plans, the developing of legal instruments, pilot projects and training programmes.

155. The Environment Fund has also been important in catalysing additional funding for environmental activities by other organizations. Contributions by other organizations to Fund projects have been estimated to be four times the cost of the contributions made by the Fund itself. Even so, the agencies and bodies within the United Nations system have continued to rely on contributions from the Environment Fund to implement many of their environmental activities. Recent financial constraints in a number of agencies have reinforced this dependence, although the World Commission on Environment and Development recommended that agencies should assume direct financial responsibility for their longer-term environmental activities such as monitoring.

156. The principal constraint on managing the Environment Fund in such a way that it might fulfil the purposes set out in the original General Assembly resolution has been the insufficient resources. Frequently, it has not been possible to finance activities that are of importance to the environment and often the activities approved have been insufficiently funded and, in consequence, the results obtained have been less than optimum. Over the period 1980-1987, contributions to the Fund stagnated within a narrow band of around $30 million per year, with the real value of those contributions falling steadily throughout.

157. The Governing Council at its fifteenth session, in its decision 15/1, section V, decided that the Fund should be increased by some 2.5 times, from the 1989 level of some $39 million to $100 million by 1992. In discussions at that time, it was understood that the real value of the $100 million would then be maintained beyond 1992 with an adequate annual increase. The decision required that all Governments increase their contributions to the Fund by at least 35 per cent per annum from the 1989 level, to enable the target to be met. For 1990, this would mean that contributions should be pledged at a level of $53.5 million. Pledges received by the end of May 1990 are $33.3 million, but it is estimated that by the end of the year contributions should achieve a level close to $52 million, indicating some shortfall from the target for the current year.

158. If UNEP is to be strengthened to undertake the reinforced role suggested by Governments, it is important that the $100 million target for 1992 be achieved at an earlier date, i.e. 1991. A commitment to a yearly increase of 25 per cent after that date would be the minimum that the Governments should consider if UNEP is to have a meaningful role in the major issue of correcting environmental deterioration. A major policy issue for the Governing Council would be to consider setting a target for annual contributions of $250 million to the Environment Fund by the year 1995.

159. The financing of the UNEP Secretariat has been of continuing concern to both the Executive Director and the Governing Council. It will be recalled that the General Assembly, in resolution 2997 (XXVII) of 15 December 1972, decided "that the costs of servicing the Governing Council and providing the small secretariat ... shall be borne by the regular budget of the United Nations and that operational programme costs, programme support and administrative costs ... shall be borne by the Fund". The definition of what constituted "the small secretariat" has never been clear, but the Executive Director was successful in persuading the managers of the regular budget to accept an increase in the number of Professional and higher-level posts funded

from that source from 34 in 1974, to 46 in 1989. In 1990, however, as part of the economy measures introduced for the regular budget, that figure of 46 was cut to 38, which is equivalent to only 13 per cent of the 290 Professional and higher-level-posts approved under all sources of financing in UNEP. Of the total of 38 Professional and higher-level posts approved under the regular budget, only 15 are in positions concerned with the development of programmes. The Environment Fund is financing 185 Professional and higher-level posts, or 64 per cent of the total, either through the programme and programme support costs budget, or through projects (including programme activity centres).

160. In spite of the 1990 cuts in UNEP posts financed under the regular budget, a higher percentage of cuts than almost any other part of the United Nations, the Executive Director has indicated to the Programme Planning and Budget Division in United Nations Headquarters that he will be requesting a doubling of the number of Professional and higher-level posts in UNEP supported by the regular budget in 1992-1993.

161. It is clear that if UNEP is to be strengthened, its staffing must be increased and the burden will fall mainly on the Environment Fund. The proportion of UNEP staff financed by the Fund is likely to increase further. However, provided that the target figure of $100 million is met by 1991 and thereafter, contributions increase by 25 per cent per annum up to 1995, which would mean reaching the $250 million target by 1995, there should be no difficulty in containing the increases in staff financed from programme and programme support costs within the limit of 33 per cent of the annual contributions. It must, however, be understood that the secretariats concerned with the administration of conventions on the environment will have to be financed directly by the parties to those conventions, and not by the Environment Fund.

162. In light of the above, a major policy issue that the Governing Council may wish to consider is whether it could agree to a feasibility study, to be presented at its next regular session, on financing the whole UNEP Secretariat from the Environment Fund.

163. The degree of support provided from the Environment Fund for essential environmental activities in developing countries has been considerable. Cost figures for this cannot be precise because of problems in defining technical co-operation within broader project activities, but it is estimated that the total over the ten-year period 1979-1988 was in the region of $170 million. In spite of this, the resources available have met only a small part of vast needs. With the consent of the Governing Council, UNEP established a Clearing-house mechanism, specifically to develop projects for developing countries and to seek alternative sources of finance for them. Although this programme has achieved some success, particularly in terms of finding bilateral donors to finance environmental projects in developing countries, overall it has been constrained by the low level of resources available for these activities.

164. For the future, it is already apparent that both bilateral and multilateral donors are making much more significant financial provision for financing environmental activities on a country level and UNEP will continue to press for this. However, the magnitude of the problems in this area - particularly if the cost of technology transfers is taken into account - is a daunting problem. The Executive Director has therefore been tackling these problems outside the ambit of the Environment Fund in the specific negotiations related to ozone, climate, biodiversity, etc.

VI. JOINT MESSAGES OF UNITED NATIONS ORGANIZATIONS

165. In view of the importance of providing authoritative environmental information, the executive heads of a number of United Nations organization are considering the advisability of issuing joint statements providing authoritative information to decision makers. The statements could be designed to encourage proper action. To this end Unesco, UNEP, WMO and other United Nations bodies and agencies are developing a proposal for joint statements on environment with the following attributes:

(a) Each would be an authoritative and collective statement by the heads of the participating organizations and would contain an assessment of the impact of various issues on countries and/or regions with different material and socio-economic conditions;

(b) Each would be addressed to Heads of State and other high-level decision makers, including advisors to Governments on science and environment;

(c) Each would deal with environmental issues which are global in nature, which require international co-operation, and in which the international organizations concerned have a unique perspective and/or experience to contribute to the scientific assessment and formulation of policy recommendations;

(d) Each would present main policy options based on rigorous scientific assessment of the topic concerned, utilizing the scientific data and information available within partner organizations, as well as that from other appropriate sources.

Annex

PROPOSED ACTION BY THE GOVERNING COUNCIL

A. ISSUES REFERRED TO THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE OF THE 1992 UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

The Governing Council may wish to consider adopting a policy decision along the following lines:

The Governing Council,

Refers the following issues to the Preparatory Committee for its consideration and action as necessary:

I. Climate change

Recalling its decision 15/36 of 25 May 1989 on global climate change;

Bearing in mind General Assembly resolution 44/207 of 22 December 1989 on climate,

1. Draws to the attention of the Preparatory Committee the need for Governments to take specific actions at the national level which help delay possible climate change and which in themselves make good economic sense;

II. Transboundary air pollution

1. Draws to the attention of the Preparatory Committee the fact that far more resources will be needed if the monitoring and assessment of background air pollution are to provide a firm base for decisions and actions by Governments;

III. Protection of ocean and coastal areas

Noting that the GESAMP report on the state of the marine environment emphasises that too little is being done at present, particularly at the national level, to ensure the health of the sea and the maintenance of its resources;

1. Draws the attention of the Preparatory Committee to the fact that, if the deterioration of coastal areas is to be halted or reversed, a major effort will be required in the coming decade to improve the implementation of regional action plans and to facilitate the adoption of concrete pollution control and resource management measures;

2. Recommends that the Preparatory Committee take up the issue of protection of ocean and coastal areas, which illustrates the interaction between environment and development, with a view to recommending specific actions over specific periods of time, indicating their costs and identifying the sources for meeting such costs, with the target of getting the Conference to adopt such actions;

IV. Combating desertification

1. Draws the attention of the Preparatory Committee to the fact that it will receive two reports. One will be a composite report containing chapters on (a) assessment of the global status of desertification; (b) evaluation of PACD; (c) progress in implementation of PACD by the United Nations system, Governments, the international community and NGOs; (d) financing anti-desertification programmes; and (e) recommendations: PACD II to the year 2020. The second will be a self-contained expert report on the financing of anti-desertification programmes;

V. The AMCEN programme

1. Brings to the attention of the Preparatory Committee the fact that the Cairo Programme for African Co-operation requires much more financial support from donors than has been forthcoming;

VI. Availability of resources for developing countries and funding mechanisms

1. Draws the attention of the Preparatory Committee to the urgent need for additional funding for the developing countries to meet their pressing environmental concerns, and for agreement on a mechanism or mechanisms which can respond quickly and flexibly to the support required by developing countries;

2. Recommends to the Preparatory Committee that additional sources of funding for the environment be made central to the Committee's deliberations and action plans;

VII. Environment and economics

1. Recommends that the Preparatory Committee review and consider possible actions on the basis of the views presented by the Executive Director on the subject of environment and economics 1/ taking into account the comments made by the Governing Council thereon;

VIII. Technology transfer

1. Brings to the attention of the Preparatory Committee the various issues related to the transfer of technology and recommends that it review and consider them in detail.

B. STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF UNEP

The Governing Council is invited to express its views on:

The role of the Governing Council

- Expanding the membership of the Council;
- Setting up an executive committee;

1/ UNEP/GCSS.II/2, paras. 95-106.

- Setting aside one day of each regular session to address issues of particular relevance to one of the five regions represented on the Council;

- Ways and means of how conflicts that touch on specific environmental matters could be responded to quickly through assistance in structuring bilateral and multilateral negotiations, conciliation, arbitration, adjudication, or other agreed means of conflict resolution;

- Setting in place terms of reference and a mechanism for mediation/arbitration that States, bodies and individuals could activate as needed;

Special session of the Governing Council

- The need to convene a one-week special session of the Council in 1992 prior to or following the 1992 Conference;

Visibility of UNEP

- Establishment of a United Nations Centre for Urgent Environmental Assistance;

- Early warning of risks of environmental deterioration;

- Establishment of a world environment academy;

- Assessment of the environmental impacts of United Nations activities;

- Encouragement of volunteers for the environment: a green brigade;

Funding

- Setting a target for annual contributions of $250 million to the Environment Fund by the year 1995;

- The feasibility of financing the whole of the UNEP secretariat from the Environment Fund;

- A call to all States to contribute generously to major environmental initiatives (ozone, climate, biodiversity, transfer of technology);

- The need to provide, in the next biennium budget, adequate financial provisions to ensure the best use of the co-ordinating mechanisms serviced by UNEP;

Co-ordination

- The possibility of the Council holding joint meetings of at least two days' duration with the UNDP Governing Council to exchange views on integration of environmental concerns in development planning, and matters to strengthen the relationship between environment and development;

Transfer of technology

- Putting as a major topic for the ministerial-level plenary portion of the Governing Council's sixteenth session the issue of technology transfer, together with the related issues of additional financing and use of space technology;

The Council could request the Executive Director to study these various issues and, taking into account the views expressed by representatives, submit a report and proposals thereon to the Council at its sixteenth session.

C. EVOLVING ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

The Governing Council is further invited:

Protection of the ozone layer

- To consider the outcome of Second Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol in London and take whatever action it deems necessary;

Climate change

- [As the suggested action on this subject is contingent upon the resolution(s) adopted by the WMO Executive Council at its forthcoming meeting in June, the Executive Director will be issuing an addendum to the present document once the outcome of the WMO Executive Committee is known. The addendum will include suggested action by the Governing Council on the subject of climate change.]

Biological diversity

- To note the progress made towards developing a global convention on biological diversity;

- To urge the Executive Director, in conjunction with the members of the Ecosystems Conservation Group, to continue to accord high priority to the Convention and, to that end, to call on the Ad Hoc Working Group of Legal and Technical Experts established for this purpose to proceed expeditiously in this task;

Environmentally sound management of biotechnology

- To request the Executive Director to establish a working group of the organizations in the United Nations system and of governmental and non-governmental experts to consider the issues outlined in the present report and to propose appropriate actions by UNEP, other United Nations organizations and Governments as an input by the to the Preparatory Committee for the 1992 Conference;

Hazardous wastes

- To call on all States that signed the Final Act of the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal to contribute immediately to meeting the cost of the Interim Secretariat and the activities that it is carrying out.

United Nations Environment Programme

Distr.
GENERAL

UNEP/GCSS.II/2/Add.1
3 July 1990

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Governing Council
Second special session

Nairobi, 1-3 August 1990
Item 3 of the Provisional Agenda

PRIORITY EVOLVING ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Report of the Executive Director

Addendum

CLIMATE CHANGE

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Developments with regard to climate change since the fifteenth session of the Council in May 1989 were reported in paragraphs 18 to 21 of document UNEP/GCSS.II/2. In his proposed action by the Governing Council on this subject, the Executive Director recommended that the need for Governments to take specific action at the national level to help delay possible climate change be brought to the attention of the Preparatory Committee for the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNEP/GCSS.II/2, Annex, A.I). With regard to more specific action by the Governing Council on this subject, the Executive Director stated he would be issuing an addendum to his report once the outcome of the forty-second session of the WMO Executive Committee was known (see UNEP/GCSS.II/2, Annex, C).

2. The Executive Committee of WMO at its meeting in June 1990 adopted three resolutions on the subject of climate change. Resolution 2.6/1 (EC-XLII), on the subject of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), contains a request that the Secretary-General of WMO, jointly with the Executive Director of UNEP, arrange for the continuation of the IPCC as a joint WMO/UNEP body. WMO Executive Council resolution 4.1/1 (EC-XLII) deals with a framework convention on climate change and, inter alia, requests the Secretary-General of WMO to convene, jointly with the Executive Director of UNEP, the first open-ended negotiating session on the framework convention on climate change not later than February 1991. WMO Executive Council resolution 4.2/1 (EC-XLII) deals with the Second World Climate Conference. The texts of the three WMO Executive Council resolutions are annexed to the present document.

3. In view of the outcome of the WMO Executive Council, the Governing Council may wish to request the Executive Director, jointly with the Secretary-General of WMO, to arrange for the continuation of IPCC as a joint UNEP/WMO body. Further, it might wish to request the Executive Director to convene, jointly with the Secretary-General of WMO, the first negotiating session on the framework convention on climate change. In view of the fact that the WMO Executive Council has already adopted its own resolutions, the Governing Council may wish to consider the Executive Director's proposed action on these two subjects which follows closely the language of the WMO resolutions.

II. SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE GOVERNING COUNCIL

A. Intergovernmental panel on climate change

4. The Governing Council may wish to consider adopting a decision along the following lines:

The Governing Council,

Noting with satisfaction the progress made by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC);

Further noting the expressions of need for the continuation of the work of IPCC by many Governments at the third plenary of the Panel (Washington D.C., 5-7 February 1990);

/...

Recognizing also the forthcoming Second World Climate Conference during which the IPCC First Assessment Report will be considered;

Requests the Executive Director, jointly with the Secretary-General of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), to arrange for the continuation of IPCC as a joint UNEP and WMO body to, inter alia:

(a) Undertake scientific and technical work in support of the negotiations of a framework convention on climate change;

(b) Periodically update the assessments of the available scientific information on climate change and the resulting environmental and socio-economic impacts;

(c) Undertake further environmental and socio-economic analyses of the various policy options posed as response strategies;

(d) Evaluate the special problems of the developing countries in their efforts to address the issue of climate change and assess possible options to deal with these problems;

(e) Take all appropriate steps to ensure the effective participation of developing countries and the broad dissemination of its work;

(f) Report regularly to the Council on the progress of its work, and through the Executive Director of UNEP and the Secretary-General of WMO to the United Nations General Assembly;

Further requests the Executive Director, in consultation with the Secretary-General of WMO, to review the report of the IPCC and the results of the Second World Climate Conference in the light of their possible implications for UNEP and WMO and to report on the review to the Council at its sixteenth session.

B. Framework convention on climate change

5. The Governing Council may wish to consider adopting a decision along the following lines:

The Governing Council,

Noting:

(1) Resolutions 43/53 and 44/207 of the United Nations General Assembly on the "Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind",

(2) Resolution 44/228 of the United Nations General Assembly "United Nations Conference on Environment and Development",

(3) The relevant parts of declarations and decisions adopted at various intergovernmental and non-governmental meetings during 1989 and 1990,

(4) Decisions of the WMO Executive Council on the Second World Climate Conference and recommendations of the Organizing Committee for the Conference,

(5) The work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which has included the compilation of the possible elements of a framework convention on climate change,

Recalling:

(1) Its decision 15/36 on global climate change,

(2) Resolution 4 (EC-XLI) of the Executive Council of WMO "Global Climate Change",

Further recalling its decision 14/20 of 18 June 1987 on global climate change,

Recognizing the actions taken by the Executive Director in co-operation with the Secretary-General of WMO to respond to the request in decision 15/36 to begin preparations for negotiations on a framework convention on climate change;

Considering that the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of Resolution 44/207 "Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind" demonstrated a universal recognition by Governments of an urgent need for concerted international efforts to address the climate change issue, in particular by negotiating, after completion of the IPCC First Assessment Report, a framework convention on climate change and adopting the convention, if possible at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992;

Convinced that further steps are needed to implement the decisions of the United Nations General Assembly and those of the governing bodies of UNEP and WMO on the negotiations of a framework convention on climate change;

Authorizes the Executive Director to convene, jointly with the Secretary-General of WMO, an open-ended ad hoc working group of Government representatives, urging that, where feasible, Governments nominate experts in climate change who have been involved in the work of the IPCC;

Requests that the ad hoc working group meet in Geneva in September 1990 to prepare for negotiations on a framework convention on climate change based, inter alia, on the findings of the IPCC First Assessment Report;

Notes with pleasure the invitation of the Government of the United States of America to host a first negotiating session on the framework convention on climate change;

Requests the Executive Director:

(1) To convene, jointly with the Secretary-General of WMO, the first open-ended negotiating session on the framework convention on climate change not later than February 1991, taking into account the invitation by the Government of the United States of America,

(2) To report, jointly with the Secretary-General of WMO, to the 45th session of the United Nations General Assembly on the progress in the preparations for negotiations on a framework convention on climate change,

(3) To report to the Council at its sixteenth session on the progress of the actions under this decision.

Annex

RESOLUTIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF WMO

Resolution 2.6/1 (EC-XLII)

INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE

The Executive Council,

Noting Resolutions 4 (EC-XL) and 4 (EC-XLI);

Noting with satisfaction the progress made by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC);

Further noting the expressions of need for the continuation of the work of IPCC by many governments at the third plenary of the Panel (Washington D.C., 5-7 February 1990);

Recognizing also the forthcoming Second World Climate Conference during which the IPCC First Assessment Report will be considered;

Requests the Secretary-General jointly with the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to arrange for the continuation of IPCC as a joint WMO and UNEP body to, inter alia:

(a) Undertake scientific and technical work in support of the negotiations of a framework convention on climate change;

(b) Periodically update the assessments of the available scientific information on climate change and the resulting environmental and socio-economic impacts;

(c) Undertake further environmental and socio-economic analyses of the various policy options posed as response strategies;

(d) Evaluate the special problems of the developing countries in their efforts to address the issue of climate change and assess possible options to deal with these problems;

(e) Take all appropriate steps to ensure the effective participation of developing countries and the broad dissemination of its work;

(f) Report regularly to the Council on the progress of its work, and through the Secretary-General of WMO and the Executive Director of UNEP to the United Nations General Assembly;

Further requests the Secretary-General in consultation with the Executive Director of UNEP to review the report of the IPCC and the results of the Second World Climate Conference in the light of their possible implications for WMO and UNEP and to report on the review to Eleventh Congress.

Resolution 4.1/1 (EC-XLII)

FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

The Executive Council,

Noting:

1. Resolutions 43/53 and 44/207 of the United Nations General Assembly on the "Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind",

2. Resolution 44/228 of the United Nations General Assembly "United Nations Conference on Environment and Development",

3. The relevant parts of declarations and decisions adopted at various intergovernmental and non-governmental meetings during 1989 and 1990,

4. Decisions of the WMO Executive Council on the Second World Climate Conference and recommendations of the Organizing Committee for the Conference,

5. The work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which has included the compilation of the possible elements of a framework convention on climate change,

Recalling:

1. Decision 15/36 of the Governing Council of UNEP on global climate change,

2. Resolution 4 (EC-XLI) of the Executive Council of WMO "Global Climate Change",

Recognizing the actions taken by the Secretary-General, in co-operation with the Executive Director of UNEP, to respond to the request in Resolution 4 (EC-XLI) to begin preparations for negotiations on a framework convention on climate change;

Considering that the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of Resolution 44/207 "Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind" demonstrated a universal recognition by governments of an urgent need for concerted international efforts to address the climate change issue, in particular by negotiating, after completion of the IPCC First Assessment Report, a framework convention on climate change and adopting the convention, if possible at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992;

Convinced that further steps are needed to implement the decisions of the United Nations General Assembly and those of the governing bodies of WMO and UNEP on the negotiations of a framework convention on climate change;

Authorizes the Secretary-General to convene jointly with the Executive Director of UNEP, an open-ended ad hoc working group of government representatives, urging that where possible, Members nominate experts in climate change who have been involved in the work of the IPCC;

/...

Requests that the ad hoc working group meet in Geneva in September 1990 to prepare for negotiations on a framework convention on climate change based, inter alia, on the findings of the IPCC First Assessment Report;

Notes with pleasure the invitation of the Government of the United States of America to host a first negotiating session on the framework convention on climate change;

Requests the Secretary-General:

1. To convene jointly with the Executive Director of UNEP the first open-ended negotiating session on the framework convention on climate change not later than February 1991 taking into account the invitation by the Government of the United States of America,

2. To report, jointly with the Executive Director of UNEP, to the 45th session of the United Nations General Assembly on the progress in the preparations for negotiations of framework convention on climate change,

3. To report to the Eleventh Congress and to the Executive Council on the progress of the actions under this resolution.

22 June 1990

Resolution 4.2/1 (EC-XLII)

SECOND WORLD CLIMATE CONFERENCE

The Executive Council,

Recalling:

1. Resolutions 43/53 and 44/207 of the United Nations General Assembly on the "Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind",

2. Resolution 44/225 of the United Nations General Assembly "United Nations Conference on Environment and Development",

3. Resolution 4 (EC-XLI) of the Executive Council of WMO "Global Climate Change",

Noting (Draft) Resolution 4.1/1 (EC-XLII) - Convention on Climate;

Authorizes the Secretary-General to convene jointly with the Executive Director of UNEP, and in close consultation with the Executive Heads of ICSU, Unesco and its IOC, following the fourth session of the IPCC, a preparatory meeting open to all interested governments, such a meeting to include experts who have been involved in the IPCC process, to draft the ministerial declaration for the Second World Climate Conference, taking into account:

1. Prior consultations with governments,

2. The work of the IPCC including its first assessment report,

3. The results of any prior preparatory meetings for the negotiation of a framework convention on climate change,

4. The work of the Preparatory Committee for the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development,

5. The need for continuation and enhancement of the necessary scientific research, monitoring and environmental and socio-economic studies of climate and climate change and the enhancement and maintenance of the observation network that provides the requisite data for these studies as the foundation upon which response strategies and policy options will be based,

6. The need to support the international exchange of information on climate and climate change,

7. The need to support intergovernmental agencies and national climate institutions, in particular those in developing countries,

Further authorizes the Secretary-General jointly with the Executive Director of UNEP to request the Secretary-General of the United Nations to plan to take into account the outputs of the Second World Climate Conference in the discussion of the climate issue during the forty-fifth session of the United Nations General Assembly;

/...

Request the Secretary-General in consultation with the Executive Heads of UNEP, Unesco and its IOC and ICSU to prepare a report to the Eleventh World Meteorological Congress including an account of the potential implications to WMO and to ensure a wide distribution of the recommendations, Declaration and Proceedings of the Conference, timely implementation of the recommendations as appropriate through follow-up regional conferences and workshops and other forms of technology transfer, and that relevant SWCC outputs are brought to the attention of the planners of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

22 June 1990

United Nations Environment Programme

Distr.
GENERAL

UNEP/GCSS.II/2/Add.2
27 June 1990

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Governing Council
Second special session

Nairobi, 1-3 August 1990
Item 3 of the Provisional Agenda

PRIORITY EVOLVING ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Addendum

ISSUES CALLING FOR POLICY GUIDANCE BY THE GOVERNING COUNCIL AT ITS SECOND SPECIAL SESSION

Note by the Executive Director

1. In submitting his report on priority evolving environmental issues (UNEP/GCSS.II/2) to the Governing Council at its second special session, the Executive Director is aware that the Council cannot possibly deal, in a single three-day session, with all the issues he has raised. For that reason, he proposed that a number of subjects be further pursued by the Council at its next (sixteenth) regular session. However, he would be grateful for any guidance the Council at its current session might wish to give him on issues to be acted upon at the sixteenth session.

2. With a view to focusing the attention of the Council on the priority issues calling for guidance and action by the Council at its current session, the Executive Director is proposing in the present note the subjects on which the Council, in his opinion, should concentrate.

3. Of primary importance at the current session is the selection of issues the Governing Council would wish to bring to the attention of the Preparatory Committee for the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, as the Committee is holding its first substantive session immediately following the Governing Council's second special session. The Executive Director, in his report, is proposing specific points with respect to eight environmental issues that could be brought to the attention of the Preparatory Committee: (i) climate change; (ii) transboundary air pollution; (iii) protection of ocean and coastal areas; (iv) combating desertification; (v) the AMCEN programme; (vi) availability of resources for developing countries and funding mechanisms; (vii) environment and economics; and (viii) technology transfer.

4. In addition, the Council is being requested to take specific decisions at its current session on the priority evolving environmental issues: climate change, biological diversity and environmentally sound management of biotechnology.

5. Lastly, the issue of the strengthening of UNEP and the Governing Council should be given serious consideration by the Council. While many of the points raised by the Executive Director on this issue do not demand immediate action, it is hoped that the Council will respond by agreeing to take up those points at its sixteenth session, on the basis of reports and recommendations to be submitted to it by the Executive Director. There are two points however, on which it is hoped the Council will take action at its current session. The Council should pronounce itself on the desirability of setting a target of $250 million for annual contributions to the Environment Fund by the year 1995. The Council should also pronounce itself on having the subject of additional financing and technology transfer, together with related issues such as the use of space technology, as an area on which to concentrate in the ministerial-level plenary deliberations of its sixteenth session.